STEVE J. STERN

Battling for Hearts and Minds

Memory Struggles in Pinochet's Chile, 1973–1988

BOOK TWO OF THE TRILOGY: *The Memory Box of Pinochet's Chile*

BATTLING FOR HEARTS AND MINDS

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A book in the series

LATIN AMERICA OTHERWISE: LANGUAGES, EMPIRES, NATIONS is a critical series. It aims to explore the emergence and consequences of concepts used to define "Latin America" while at the same time exploring the broad interplay of political, economic, and cultural practices that have shaped Latin American worlds. Latin America, at the crossroads of competing imperial designs and local responses, has been construed as a geocultural and geopolitical entity since the nineteenth century. This series provides a starting point to redefine Latin America as a configuration of political, linguistic, cultural, and economic intersections that demands a continuous reappraisal of the role of the Americas in history, and of the ongoing process of globalization and the relocation of people and cultures that have characterized Latin America's experience. *Latin America Otherwise: Languages, Empires, Nations* is a forum that confronts established geocultural constructions, that rethinks area studies and disciplinary boundaries, that assesses convictions of the academy and of public policy, and that, correspondingly, demands that the practices through which we produce knowledge and understanding about and from Latin America be subject to rigorous and critical scrutiny.

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September 11 brought terror to Chile when General Augusto Pinochet, in 1973, led a coup to overthrow the country's elected president, Salvador Allende. With the backing of the United States, Pinochet used the machinery of state to intimidate Chile's citizenry and unspeakable acts of state violence—torture and murder—became life's daily fare. Steve Stern here asks piercing questions of historical memory—how those who suffered as well as how those who caused such inhuman suffering recalled those terrible times.

Steve Stern has written an extraordinary trilogy, "The Memory Box of Pinochet's Chile," devoted to those years and how they were understood by participants in the horrors. *Battling for Hearts and Minds: Memory Struggles in Pinochet's Chile, 1973–1988*, the second book in the trilogy, focuses on the devastating period beginning with Pinochet's coup and ending with the plebiscite of 1988 when Chileans voted the dictator out of power. It explores struggles for political legitimacy as expressed by struggles over memory: the Chilean state's official view of history versus the voices of dissent that reckoned the past in a strikingly different calculus. Stern traces the changing balance of feelings toward Chile's past from the 1970s, when Pinochet captured the political apparatus and, to a significant extent, popular approval, to the 1980s, when his rule and the official presentation of the past were increasingly doubted. Stern points to four structures of memory through which Chile's past was understood, accepted, and challenged. These interacted in ways that transformed Chile's moral politics, and turned the idea of memory into a sacred symbol and battleground.

STEVE J. STERN

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Para mi tan querida Florencia,

mi chilenita de corazón,

corazón sin fronteras . . .

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Acknowledgments

If the measure of one's riches is people—the help and friendship one receives from others—I am one of the richest persons on earth. I have so many people to thank for making this project possible, and for improving how it turned out.

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I dedicate this trilogy to my brilliant colleague and beloved partner for life, Florencia E. Mallon. The intellectual ideas and information and support you contributed to this work were fundamental, yet they constitute only a modest fraction of the many reasons for a thank you and a dedication. Our journey together has been a wondrous gift. May the journey never end.

1. Chile in the Pinochet Era.

This map shows major cities, towns, and sites of memory struggle mentioned in the trilogy text. It excludes the Juan Fernández Islands, Easter Island, and Chilean Antarctic territory. For a more detailed geography of places and memory sites in the central and southern regions, see map 2 (opposite). *Cartographic Laboratory, University of Wisconsin, Madison.*

Puchuncaví
Viña del Mar
Valparaíso
Curacaví
Isla Negra
San Antonio
Tejas Verdes
Lo Gallardo
Talagante
Lonquén
Isla de Maipo
Aconcagua 6958m
San Felipe
Quillota
Colina
Mapocho R.
Santiago
Maipo R.
Rancagua
El Teniente
San Fernando
Rancagua

CHILE

Pacific Ocean

Talca
Parral
Talcahuano
Tomé
Chillán
Coronel
Concepción
Lota
Colonia Dignidad
Bío-Bío River
Lautaro
Temuco
Puerto Saavedra
Toltén R.
Pucón
Valdivia
Panguipulli
Osorno
Puerto Octay
Puerto Montt
Tronador 3554m

ARGENTINA

N

70°

40°

- - - International boundary
● National capital
· Other city, town, or site
◌ Lake
Λ Mountain

0   100   200   300   400 Kilometers

2. Central and Southern Chile in the Pinochet Era.
This map shows cities, towns, and sites of memory struggle mentioned in the trilogy text, and corresponding to central and southern regions (Regions V through X and the Metropolitan Region). *Cartographic Laboratory, University of Wisconsin, Madison.*

Introduction to
the Trilogy

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The Memory Box of Pinochet's Chile

This trilogy, The Memory Box of Pinochet's Chile, studies how Chileans have struggled to define the meaning of a collective trauma: the military action of 11 September 1973, when a junta composed of Augusto Pinochet and three other generals toppled the elected socialist government of Salvador Allende, and the massive political violence unleashed against perceived enemies and critics of the new regime.

The time frame under analysis corresponds to Pinochet's period as a major figure in public life—from 1973, when he stepped into rule as the army's commanding general in the new military junta, to 2001, when a Chilean court ruling on his health released him from jeopardy in criminal proceedings but completed his marginalization from public life. Many of the tensions and dilemmas analyzed for the 1990–2001 postdictatorship period, however, continued to shape national life and power after 2001. In this sense, "Pinochet's Chile" and its attendant memory struggles have remained a strong legacy, even as the person of Pinochet has receded.

The crisis of 1973 and the violence of the new order generated a contentious memory question in Chilean life. The memory question proved central to the remaking of Chilean politics and culture, first under the military regime that ruled until 1990, and subsequently under a democracy shadowed by legacies of dictatorship and a still-powerful military. As a result, the study of memory cannot be disentangled from an account of wider political, economic, and cultural contexts. Indeed, the making of memory offers a useful new lens on the general course of Chilean history in the last quarter of the twentieth century. To my knowledge, although excellent studies have established a reliable chronicle of basic political and economic events (some of them related to collective memory themes) under the rule of Pinochet, there still does not exist an account that systematically traces the long process of making and disputing memory by distinct social actors within a

deeply divided society, across the periods of dictatorship and democratic transition.

The memory question is not only a major subject in its own right; its history opens up the underexplored "hearts and minds" aspect of the dictatorship experience. We often see the history and legacy of recent dictatorships in South America, especially Chile, in terms of several now-obvious and well-analyzed aspects: the facts of brute force and repression, and the attending spread of fear; the imposition of neoliberal economic policy, and the corresponding dismantling of statist approaches to social welfare and economic development; the rise of a depoliticized technocratic culture, within and beyond the state, and its consequences for social movements and political activism; and the political pacts and continuing power of militaries that conditioned transitions and the quality of democracies in South America in the 1980s and 1990s. These are crucial themes (and many were not at first obvious). A superb social science literature has emerged over the years to analyze them—a key early wave on "bureaucratic authoritarianism" led by Guillermo O'Donnell among others, followed by more recent waves on transitions and democratization. This literature has also illuminated relationships between modernity, technocracy, and state terror—that is, South America's version of a central disturbing issue of twentieth-century world history, posed forcefully by reflections on the Holocaust, and reinforced by regimes of terror and mass atrocity that arose in various world regions after World War II.[1]

The history of "memory" enables us to see an additional aspect of Chilean life that is subtle yet central: the making and unmaking of political and cultural legitimacy, notwithstanding violent rule by terror. In the struggle for hearts and minds in Chile, the memory question became strategic—politically, morally, existentially—both during and after dictatorship. In this way "memory," which by the 1980s crystallized as a key cultural idea, code word, and battleground, casts fresh light on the entire era of dictatorship and constrained democracy from the 1970s through the 1990s. Its study complements the fine scholarly analyses that have given more attention to the facts of force and imposition than to the making of subjectivity and legitimacy within an era of force. Indeed, the lens of memory struggle invites us to move beyond rigid conceptual dichotomy between a top-down perspective oriented to elite engineering, and a bottom-up perspective that sees its obverse: suppression, punctuated by outbursts of protest. In this scheme, the moments of protest render visible the frustration, desperation,

organizing, and resilience that often have an underground or marginalized aspect in conditions of repressive dictatorship or constrained democracy.

Tracing the history of memory struggles invites us to consider not only the genuine gap and tensions between top-down and bottom-up perspectives but also more subtle interactive dynamics within a history of violence and repression. We see efforts of persuasion from above to shore up or expand a social base from below, not simply to solidify support and concentrate power from above; grassroots efforts to seek influence among, split off, or pressure the elites of state, church, and political parties, not simply to organize networks, influence, and protest among subaltern groups and underdogs; specific collaborations in media, human rights, cultural, or political projects that yield both tension and synergy among actors in distinct "locations" in the social hierarchy, from respectable or powerful niches in state, church, and professional institutions, to precarious or stigmatized standing as street activists, victim-survivors, the poor and unemployed, and alleged subversives. Memory projects—to record and define the reality of the Allende era and its culminating crisis of 1973, to record and define the reality of military rule and its human rights drama—ended up becoming central to the logic by which people sought and won legitimacy in a politically divided and socially heterogeneous society that experienced a great turn and trauma.[2]

The repression in Pinochet's Chile was large in scale and layered in its implementation. In a country of only 10 million people in 1973, individually proved cases of death or disappearance by state agents (or persons in their hire) amount to about 3,000; torture victims run in the dozens of thousands; documented political arrests exceed 82,000; the exile flow amounts to about 200,000. These are lower-end figures, suitable for a rock-bottom baseline. Even using a conservative methodology, a reasonable estimated toll for deaths and disappearances by state agents is 3,500–4,500, for political detentions 150,000–200,000. Some credible torture estimates surpass the 100,000 threshold, some credible exile estimates reach 400,000.[3]

The experience of a state turning violently against a portion of its own citizenry is always dramatic. In a society of Chile's size, these figures translate into pervasiveness. A majority of families, including supporters and sympathizers of the military regime, had a relative, a friend, or an acquaintance touched by one or another form of repression. Just as important, from political and cultural points of view, Pinochet's Chile pioneered a new tech-

nique of repression in the Latin American context: systematic "disappearance" of people. After the point of abduction, people vanished in a cloud of secrecy, denial, and misinformation by the state. Also important was cultural shock. Many Chileans believed such violence by the state—beyond margins set by legal procedure and human decency—to be an impossibility. Fundamentally, their society was too civilized, too law abiding, too democratic. In 1973, many victims voluntarily turned themselves in when they appeared on arrest lists.[4]

The Chilean story of memory struggle over the meanings and truths of a violent collective shock is part of a larger story of "dirty war" dictatorships in South America. During the 1960s and 1970s, at the height of the Cold War, ideas of social justice and revolution sparked significant sympathy and social mobilization. Urban shantytowns were populated by poor laborers, street sellers, and migrants in search of a better life. Many rural regions evinced systems of land tenure, technology, and social abuse that seemed anachronistic as well as violent and unjust. Educated youths and progressive middle-class sectors saw in the young Cuban revolution either an inspiring example or a wake-up call that argued for deep reforms. Presidents of influential countries such as Brazil and Chile announced agrarian reform —an idea whose political time had finally arrived. On the fringes of established politics, some middle-class youths began to form guerrilla groups, hoping to produce a revolution through sheer audacity.

Not surprisingly, proponents of deep change—whether they considered themselves "reformers" or "revolutionaries"—ran up against entrenched opposition, fear, and polarization. The obvious antagonists included the socially privileged under the status quo, that is, wealthy families and social circles under fire in the new age of reform, middle-class sectors who either identified with conservative social values or were frightened by possible upheaval, and notable landowning families and their local intermediaries in rural regions facing agrarian reform. There were unexpected antagonists, too, including persons of modest means and backgrounds. Some poor and lower middle-class residents of urban shantytowns, for example, proved nervous and interested in order as they saw polarization unfold, were dubious about the viability of grand reforms, or had aligned themselves on one side or another of the political squabbles among competing reformers and revolutionaries.[5]

Most important for the political and cultural future, however, the antago-

nists included militaries whose doctrines of national security, consistent with the ideology of the Cold War, came to define the internal enemy as the fundamental enemy of the nation. In this line of thinking, the whole way of understanding politics that had arisen in Latin America was a cancerous evil. The problem went beyond that of achieving transitory relief by toppling a government if it went too far in threatening the military forces' institutional cohesion or interests, or if it went too far in upsetting the status quo, mobilizing the downtrodden, tolerating self-styled revolutionaries or guerrillas, or sparking economic crisis or social disorder. The "political class" of elites who worked the body politic had become addicted to demagoguery, and civil society included too many people addicted to the idea of organizing politically to end injustice. The result was fertile ground for the spread of Marxism and subversion that would destroy society from within.

As military regimes displaced civilian ones, they defined a mission more ambitious than transitory relief from an untenable administration. They would create a new order. The new military regimes would conduct a "dirty war" to root out subversives and their sympathizers once and for all, to frighten and depoliticize society at large, to lay the foundation for a technocratic public life. To a greater or lesser degree, such regimes spread over much of South America—Brazil in 1964 (with notable "hardening" in 1968), Bolivia in 1971, Chile and Uruguay in 1973, and Argentina in 1976. Paraguay, ruled by General Alfredo Stroessner since 1954, followed a distinct political dynamic but aligned itself with the transnational aspect of the new scheme—"Operation Condor," a program of secret police cooperation across South American borders. To a greater or lesser degree, all these regimes also generated contentious struggles over "memory"—truth, justice, meaning.[6]

The Chilean version of struggles over collective memory is worth telling in its own right. It is a dramatic story, filled with heroism and disappointment on matters of life and death. It is a story of moral consciousness, as human beings attempted to understand and to convince compatriots of the meaning of a great and unfinished trauma and its ethical and political implications. It is a story that lends itself to serious historical research, because it has unfolded over a long stretch of time, because survivors and witnesses are still alive, and because it generated substantial and diverse documentary trails. Indeed, this trilogy draws on three streams of sources: written documents—archival, published, and, more recently, electronic—that constitute the traditional heart of historical research; audio and visual

traces of the past, in television and video archives, photojournalism, radio transcripts, and sound recordings; and oral history, including formal semi-structured interviews, less formal interviews and exchanges, and field notes from participant-observation experiences and focus groups. The "Essay on Sources" offers a more technical guide to these sources, as well as a reflection on oral history method and debates.

The Chilean version of the memory question is also worth telling because of its international significance. For better or worse, the long and narrow strip of western South America we call Chile has constituted an influential symbol in world culture in the last half century. As the model "Alliance for Progress" country of the 1960s, it constituted the Kennedy and Johnson administrations' best example of a Latin American society that could stop "another Cuba" through democratic social reforms assisted by the United States. When Salvador Allende was elected president in 1970, his project—an electoral road to socialism and justice in a Third World society—exerted almost irresistible symbolism. The blending of a Western-style electoral political culture with socialist idealism and economic policies had obvious resonance in Western Europe and its labor-oriented parties, and it provoked extreme hostility from the Nixon administration. The David-versus-Goliath aspect of relations between Chile and the United States proved compelling across the conventional fault lines of international politics. Allende's Chile drew sympathetic attention not only among radicals, social democrats, and solidarity-minded activists in the West but also in the Soviet bloc countries and in the "Non-aligned Movement" then influential in the Third World and the United Nations. Chile, a small country determined to achieve social justice by democratic means, against odds set by a monstrous power spreading death and destruction in Vietnam, stood as the beleaguered yet proud symbol of a wider yearning.

After 1973, Chile continued to occupy a large symbolic place in world culture. For critics and admirers alike, the new regime became a kind of laboratory, an example of early neoliberalism in Latin America and its power to transform economic life. Most of all and most controversially, Pinochet and the Chile he created became icons of the "dirty war" dictatorships spreading over South America. For many, Pinochet was also the icon of U.S. government (or Nixon-Kissinger) complicity with evil in the name of anti-Communism.

In short, the symbolic power of Augusto Pinochet's Chile crossed national borders. For the world human rights movement, as Kathryn Sikkink

has shown, Chile's 1973 crisis and violence constituted a turning point. It marked a "before" and "after" by galvanizing new memberships in human rights organizations such as Amnesty International; by sparking new organizations, such as Washington Office on Latin America; by spreading "human rights" as an international vocabulary and common sense—a public concern voiced in transnational networks from the United Nations, to churches and nongovernmental organizations including solidarity groups, to influential media and political leaders including the U.S. Congress. The symbolism of Pinochet and Chile's 1973 crisis proved more than a short-lived blip. For many (including baby boomers in Europe and the United States, who became politically and culturally influential in the 1990s) it had been a defining moment of moral growth and awareness. The symbolism was reactivated in October 1998, when London police detained Pinochet by request of a Spanish judge investigating crimes against humanity. It has been reinforced by the precedent set by his arrest for international human rights law.[7]

What has given memory of Chile's 1973 crisis and the violence it unleashed such compelling value? As a story in its own right, and as a symbol beyond its borders? The answers are many, and they include the value of work undertaken by many Chileans in exile—to mobilize international solidarity, to work professionally on themes of human rights, to build circuits of political dialogue, with Europeans and North Americans as well as among themselves, about the meaning of the Chilean experience. Among many valid reasons, however, one cuts to the core. Chile is Latin America's example of the "German problem." The Holocaust and the Nazi experience bequeathed to contemporary culture a profoundly troubling question. How does a country capable of amazing achievement in the realm of science or culture also turn out to harbor amazing capacity for barbarism? Can one reconcile—or better, disentangle—the Germany that produced and appreciated Beethoven and Wagner from the Germany that produced and appreciated Hitler and Goebbels?

In the case of Latin America, tragic historical patterns and international cultural prejudices may incline the foreign citizen-observer to view violent repression and the overthrow of elected civilian governments as in some way "expected"—part of Latin America's "normal" course of history. After all, Latin America has not been notable for the resilience of democratic institutions, nor for hesitation about using strong-arm methods of political rule.

In the case of Chile, however, both Chileans and outsiders believed in a myth of exceptionalism. Chile was, like other Latin American societies, afflicted by great social needs and great social conflicts. But it was also a land of political and cultural sophistication. Its poets (Gabriela Mistral, Pablo Neruda) won Nobel Prizes. Its Marxist and non-Marxist leaders were veterans of a parliamentary tradition resonant with Western Europe. Its intellectuals worked out respected new approaches to international economics with the United Nations Economic Commission on Latin America. Its soldiers understood not to intervene in the political arrangements of civilians. In Chile, social mobilization and turbulence could be reconciled with the rule of law and competitive elections. The political system was democratic and resilient. Over time it had incorporated once-marginalized social sectors—the urban middle class, workers, women, peasants, and the urban poor. Its leaders and polemicists knew how to retreat into the conserving world of gentleman politicians, where cultural refinement could be appreciated, a drink or a joke could be shared, the heat of verbal excess and battle pushed aside for another day. In this clublike atmosphere, personal confidences were reestablished to navigate the next round of conflict and negotiation. Compared to other Latin American countries, military intervention was rare and had not happened since the early 1930s. Chile's "amazing achievement," in the Latin American context, was precisely its resilient democratic constitutionalism.

Not only did the myth of democratic resilience finally break apart under the stresses of the 1960s and early 1970s. The country also descended into a world of brutality beyond the imaginable, at least in a Chilean urban or middle-class context. The assumed core of Chile, civilized and democratic and incapable of trampling law or basic human decency, would not resurface for a very long time. What happened after the military takeover of 11 September 1973 was more shocking than the takeover itself.[8]

Beyond the argument that a history of memory offers insight into the "hearts and minds" drama, still present and unfinished, of Pinochet's Chile, a brief statement of how I specifically approach memory—what I am arguing against, what I am arguing for—may be useful. Two influential ideas hover over discussions of memory in Chile. The first invokes the dichotomy of memory against forgetting (*olvido*). In essence, memory struggles are struggles against oblivion. This dichotomy, of course, is pervasive in many studies of collective memory in many parts of the world and not without

reason. The dialectic of memory versus forgetting is an inescapable dynamic, perceived as such by social actors in the heat of their struggles. In regimes of secrecy and misinformation, the sense of fighting oblivion, especially in the human rights community, is powerful and legitimate. In recent years, influential criticism of the postdictatorship society of the 1990s has invoked the dichotomy of remembering against forgetting to characterize Chile as a culture of oblivion, marked by a tremendous compulsion to forget the past and the uncomfortable. A second influential idea, related to the first, is that of the Faustian bargain. In this idea, amnesia occurs because the middle classes and the wealthy, as beneficiaries of economic prosperity created by the military regime, developed the habit of denial or looking the other way on matters of state violence. They accept moral complacency as the price of economic comfort—the Faustian bargain that seals "forgetting."[9]

The interpretation in this trilogy argues against these ideas. The dissent is partial; I do not wish to throw out the baby with the bathwater. At various points in the analysis, I too invoke the dialectic of memory versus forgetting and attend to the influence of economic well-being in political and cultural inclination to forget. The problem with the memory-against-forgetting dichotomy, and the related idea of a Faustian bargain, is not that they are "wrong" or "untrue" in the simple sense. It is that they are insufficient— profoundly incomplete and in some ways misleading.

What I am arguing *for* is study of contentious memory as a process of competing selective remembrances, ways of giving meaning to and drawing legitimacy from human experience. The memory-against-forgetting dichotomy is too narrow and restrictive; it tends to align one set of actors with memory and another with forgetting. In the approach I have taken, the social actors behind distinct frameworks are seeking to define that which is truthful and meaningful about a great collective trauma. They are necessarily selective as they give shape to memory, and they may all see themselves as struggling, at one point or another, against the oblivion propagated by their antagonists.

Historicizing memory in this way blurs an old conceptual distinction, given a new twist by the distinguished memory scholar Pierre Nora, between "history" as a profession or science purporting to preserve or reconstruct the unremembered or poorly remembered past; and "memory" as a subjective, often emotionally charged and flawed, awareness of a still-present past that emerges within a community environment of identity and

experience. Insofar as the historian must take up memory struggles and frameworks as a theme for investigation in its own right—as a set of relationships, conflicts, motivations, and ideas that *shaped* history—the distinction begins to break down. The point of oral history research becomes not only to establish the factual truth or falsehood of events in a memory story told by an informant but also to understand what social truths or processes led people to tell their stories the way they do, in recognizable patterns. When examining the history of violent "limit experiences," moreover, the historian cannot escape the vexing problems of representation, interpretation, and "capacity to know" that attach to great atrocities. Conventional narrative strategies and analytical languages seem inadequate; professional history itself seems inadequate—one more "memory story" among others.[10]

The metaphor I find useful—to picture memory as competing selective remembrances to give meaning to, and find legitimacy within, a devastating community experience—is that of a giant, collectively built memory box. The memory chest is foundational to the community, not marginal; it sits in the living room, not in the attic. It contains several competing scripted albums, each of them works in progress that seek to define and give shape to a crucial turning point in life, much as a family album may script a wedding or a birth, an illness or a death, a crisis or a success. The box also contains "lore" and loose memories, that is, the stray photos and mini-albums that seem important to remember but do not necessarily fit easily in the larger scripts. The memory chest is a precious box to which people are drawn, to which they add or rearrange pictures and scripts, and about which they quarrel and even scuffle. This trilogy asks how Chileans built and struggled over the "memory box of Pinochet's Chile," understood as the holder of truths about a traumatic turning point in their collective lives.

When considering the consequences of such memory struggles for politics, culture, and democratization, I argue that Chile arrived at a culture of "memory impasse," more complex than a culture of oblivion, by the mid-to-late 1990s. The idea of a culture of forgetting, facilitated by Faustian complacency, is useful up to a point, but it simplifies the Chilean path of memory struggles and distorts the cultural dynamics in play. The problem turned out to be more subtle and in some ways more horrifying. On the one hand, forgetting itself included a conscious component—political and cultural decisions to "close the memory box," whether to save the political skin of those implicated by "dirty" memory, or in frustration because memory poli-

tics proved so intractable and debilitating. It is this conscious component of "remembering to forget" that is often invoked when human rights activists cite a famous phrase by Mario Benedetti, "oblivion is filled with memory." On the other hand, memory of horror and rupture also proved so unforgettable or "obstinate," and so important to the social actors and politics of partial redemocratization in the 1990s, that it could not really be buried in oblivion.[11]

What emerged instead was impasse. Cultural belief by a majority in the truth of cruel human rupture and persecution under dictatorship, and in the moral urgency of justice, unfolded alongside political belief that Pinochet, the military, and their social base of supporters and sympathizers remained too strong for Chile to take logical "next steps" along the road of truth and justice. The result was not so much a culture of forgetting, as a culture that oscillated—as if caught in moral schizophrenia—between prudence and convulsion. To an extent, this was a "moving impasse." Specific points of friction in the politics of truth, justice, and memory changed; the immobilizing balance of power did not simply remain frozen. But travel to logical "next steps" in memory work proved exceedingly slow and arduous, and the process often turned back, as in a circle, to a reencounter with impasse between majority desire and minority power.

The impasse has unraveled partially since 1998. It remains an open question—a possible focal point of future struggles—whether memory impasse will prove so enduring and debilitating that it will eventually yield, for new generations in the twenty-first century, a culture of oblivion.

A brief guide to organization may prove useful. I have designed the trilogy to function at two levels. On the one hand, the trio may be viewed as an integrated three-volume work. The books unfold in a sequence that builds a cumulative, multifaceted history of—and argument about—the Pinochet era, the memory struggles it unleashed, and its legacy for Chilean democracy since 1990. On the other hand, each volume stands on its own and has a distinct focus and purpose. Each has its own short introduction (which incorporates in schematic form any indispensable background from preceding volumes) and its own conclusions. Each reproduces, as a courtesy to readers of any one book who wish to understand its place within the larger project and its premises, this General Introduction and the Essay on Sources.

Book One, *Remembering Pinochet's Chile: On the Eve of London 1998*, is a

short introductory volume written especially for general readers and students. It uses select human stories to present key themes and memory frameworks, historical background crossing the 1973 divide, and conceptual tools helpful for analyzing memory as a historical process. Its main purpose, however, is to put human faces on the major frameworks of memory—including those friendly to military rule—that came to be influential in Chile, while also providing a feel for memory lore and experiences silenced or marginalized by such frameworks. The "ethnographic present" of the book, the most "literary" and experimental of the three, is the profoundly divided Chile of 1996–97, when memory impasse seemed both powerful and insuperable. Pinochet's 1998 London arrest, the partial unraveling of memory impasse and immunity from justice in 1998–2001—these would have seemed fantasies beyond the realm of the possible.

Subsequent volumes undertake the historical analysis proper of memory struggles as they unfolded in time. Book Two, *Battling for Hearts and Minds: Memory Struggles in Pinochet's Chile, 1973–1988*, traces the memory drama under dictatorship. It shows how official and counterofficial memory frameworks emerged in the 1970s, and expressed not only raw power but also brave moral struggle—remarkable precisely because power was so concentrated—centered on the question of human rights. It proceeds to show how dissident memory, at first the realm of beleaguered "voices in the wilderness," turned into mass experience and symbols that energized protest in the 1980s and set the stage for Pinochet's defeat in a plebiscite to ratify his rule in October 1988.

Pinochet's 1988 defeat did not lead to a one-sided redrawing of power but rather to a volatile transitional environment—tense blends of desire, initiative, constraint, and imposition. The most explosive fuel in this combustible mix was precisely the politics of memory, truth, and justice. Book Three, *Reckoning with Pinochet: The Memory Question in Democratic Chile, 1989–2001*, explores the memory-related initiatives and retreats, the tensions and saber rattling, the impasse of power versus desire, that shaped the new democracy and its coming to terms with "Pinochet's Chile." For readers of the entire trilogy, Book Three completes the circle by bringing us back to the point of frustrating impasse, now traced as historical process, that served as an "ethnographic present" in Book One. But Book Three also spirals out from there—by taking us into the realm of accelerated and unexpected unravelings of impasse and taboo after 1998, and into historical conclu-

sions about memory and the times of radical evil that are, paradoxically, both hopeful and sobering.

An unusual feature of these books' organization of chapters requires comment. Each main chapter of a book is followed by an Afterword, intended as a complement that enriches, extends, or unsettles the analysis in the main chapter. At the extreme, an "unsettling" Afterword questions—draws limits on the validity of—a main chapter. Each book's numbering system links main chapters and corresponding Afterwords explicitly (the chapter sequence is *not* 1, 2, 3 . . . but rather 1, Afterword, 2, Afterword, 3, Afterword . . .). In an age of Internet reading, such lateral links may not seem unfamiliar. But my purpose here has little to do with the Internet or postmodern tastes. On the one hand, I have searched for an aesthetic—moving forward in the argument while taking some glances back—that seems well suited to the theme of memory. On the other hand, the Afterword method also draws out useful substantive points. At some stages, it sharpens awareness of contradiction and fissure by creating counterpoint—for example, between a lens focused on changes in the adult world of memory politics and culture, and one trained on the memory world of youth.

Above all, I am aware that in books about remembrance, which pervades human consciousness and belongs to everyone, something important is lost in the analytical selectivity that necessarily governs chapters about main national patterns or trends. The Afterwords allow the revealing offbeat story, rumor, or joke that circulates underground; the incident or bit of memory folklore that is pertinent yet poor of fit with a grander scheme; the provincial setting overwhelmed by a national story centered in Santiago, to step to the fore and influence overall texture and interpretation more forcefully. They are a way of saying that in cultures of repression and impasse, it is the apparently marginal or insignificant that sometimes captures the deeper meaning of a shocking experience.

A history of memory struggles is a quest, always exploratory and unfinished, to understand the subjectivity of a society over time. At bottom, this trilogy is a quest to find *Chile profundo*—or better, the various Chiles profundos—that experienced a searing and violent upheaval. Sometimes we find "deep Chile" in a chapter about the nation's main story. Sometimes, Chile profundo exists at the edges of the main story.

Introduction to
Book Two

⌘

Battling for Hearts and Minds

Between 1973 and 1988, General Augusto Pinochet and his collaborators ruled Chile with an iron will. Violent repression, however, was not their only instrument of rule. Pinochet and the regime also waged and won, and then waged and lost, a battle to win Chilean hearts and minds.

The memory question—how to record and remember the crisis that yielded a military coup on 11 September 1973, how to record and remember the reality and violence of military rule—proved central to this struggle for politicocultural legitimacy. This book studies the dramatic memory struggles that unfolded under the dictatorship, from the crisis and coup of 1973 through the defeat of Pinochet in a plebiscite that backfired in 1988. Although this book does not dwell on theory or method as such, its working method is to trace the formation and social impact of "memory knots"—that is, the specific human groups and leaders, specific events and anniversary or commemoration dates, and specific physical remains or places that *demanded* attention to memory. Elsewhere (in Book One of this trilogy), I have provided a theoretical discussion of the role of specific sites of humanity, time, and space as "memory knots on the social body" that unsettle the complacency or "unthinking habits" of everyday life, and stir up polemics about memory in the public imagination.[1] Informed by that theoretical approach, this book focuses on social actors and human networks seeking to find and shape meanings of the traumatic past-within-the-present, that is, to push the memory-truths they considered urgent into the public domain. It focuses too on the emergence of "unforgettable" times and places—a calendar of sacred events, pseudoevents, and anniversaries on the one hand, a geography of sacred remains, sites, and material symbols on the other. These compelling knots in time and space galvanized appeals for moral or political awareness, drew people into identifying with one or another framework of memory-truth, and inspired some to join the social actors who "performed" memory work and identification in public spaces.

In tracing the course of such memory struggles, this book hopes to illuminate their profound impact on Chilean politics, society, and culture. A junta that began with majority legitimacy in 1973, and that held in the late 1980s the advantages of dictatorial control, a rebounding economy, and a citizenry socialized into fear, nonetheless lost a vote to ratify its legitimacy in 1988. A language of inviolable human rights that failed to resonate forcefully in 1973—when politicocultural debate focused on revolution, constitutionalism, and civil war—proved culturally urgent in 1988. The period between 1973 and 1988 witnessed not simply repression and divided memory of state-sponsored atrocity, but also relentless efforts on all sides to build new moral consciousness and new political values. Struggles over the truth of "how to remember" constituted the battleground for moral, cultural, and political legitimacy. This contest mattered, because it had life-and-death consequences for people living under dictatorship, and because its outcome would set contours—cherished core values and frustrating constraints—for the postdictatorship society.

This book is divided into two parts. Part I, "Foundational Years: Building the Memory Box, 1973–1982," studies the making of memory frameworks during the formative early years of military rule. In the 1970s, Chileans forged four contending memory frameworks that would endure through the 1990s. Partisans of junta rule remembered military intervention in 1973 as the salvation of a society in ruins and on the edge of a violent bloodbath. This was the official memory framework favored by the regime. Victims, critics, human rights activists, and persons of conscience, in sharp contrast to the partisans, built up counterofficial frameworks—while struggling against fear, repression, and misinformation—to document the brutal new reality of life under military rule. Relatives of those who vanished remembered military rule as an astonishingly cruel and unending rupture of life—an open wound that cannot heal—through massive executions and "disappearances" of people. Cruelty and torment were compounded by the state's continuous denial of knowledge or responsibility for the repression. A third and closely related framework remembered the past-within-the-present as an experience of persecution and awakening. Solidarity and religious activists who supported victims and their families and who pushed human rights concerns into the public domain bore witness to the junta's multifaceted and layered repression—not only deaths and disappearances but also torture, imprisonment, exile, employment purges, and intimidation,

organized by a secret-police state and accompanied by a general dismantling of socioeconomic rights and organizing rights. This memory camp also bore witness to the repression's antithesis: the moral awakening of conscience. As memory and human rights controversy sharpened and coincided with other causes of political split and crisis in the late 1970s, regime leaders and supporters developed a fourth framework—memory as mindful forgetting, a closing of the box on the times of "dirty" war and excess. In this perspective, the early junta years had been times of dirty war that were now thankfully superseded, even as they had laid a foundation for future progress. It would do no good to society to revisit the wounds and excesses of those times.

These four memory frameworks—memory as salvation, as cruel rupture, as persecution and awakening, as closure—did not arise all at once or smoothly. Nor did their meanings, justifications, and implications remain flatly uniform over time. Part I traces their making over time, via trial and error and struggle, in an era that was at once traumatic, frightening, and confusing, and also filled with moral and existential drama. Indeed, it was only by the late 1970s and early 1980s, and as a consequence of the struggles traced in part I, that the idea of "memory" itself crystallized into a significant cultural code word in its own right.

Part II, "Struggles for Control: Memory Politics as Mass Experience, 1983–1988," studies how the politics of memory ended up merging with tumultuous mass struggles for control that rocked the regime. The brave voices of dissident memory in the 1970s included morally influential people, and they set contours for counterofficial memory frameworks well into the 1980s and 1990s. Nonetheless, dissident memory voices in the 1970s were in a sense "voices in the wilderness." The regime managed to control most of the public domain most of the time, that is, to weather crises and come out stronger and to contain the expansion of public dissent. By 1980–81, the military regime seemed resilient and hegemonic—to have institutionalized itself successfully, despite earlier moments of crisis sparked in part by memory struggles related to human rights. In the 1980s, however, struggles for control broke apart earlier boundaries of containment and turned into mass experiences—through repeated street protests and rallies despite fierce repression, through media muckraking that broke taboos and media self-censorship, and through explicit revival of politics despite the official suspension of politics. One result was that dissident memory underwent rapid and turbulent expansion, and it fed into wider struggles to defeat

the dictatorship. Memory of military rule as a story of rupture, persecution, and awakening turned into a kind of common sense, acquiring new layers of meaning and symbolism. The idea that memory *mattered*—that it brought forth fundamental issues of truth, justice, and morality—also turned into a cultural common sense. As in the drama of part I, the process of memory making—the turning of the dissident memory camp into society's majority memory camp—did not unfold in smooth linear fashion, but rather in relation to fierce contests for control and in the face of state suppression and violence. Nor were memory struggles free of divisive internal dynamics within one or another memory camp.

Part II traces this turbulent process of mass memory struggle and the way it produced a paradox by 1988. On the one hand, Pinochet lost cultural control of the public domain and lost the instruments of "soft" political control. He had lost the hearts and minds of the Chilean majority, which had come to see in military rule a deeply troubling narrative of human rights violations—memory as wounding ruptures of life, memory as persecutions whose witness also inspires an awakening into new values. On the other hand, Pinochet had not lost the instruments of "hard" political control. He retained a substantial minority social base that included strategic social sectors—the investor class, and a cohesive army still under his command. That base was deeply loyal, in part because it remembered military rule as salvation of a country in ruins. For some, loyalty also meant counting on Pinochet to continue enforcing legal amnesty, that is, closure of the memory box on "dirty war" aspects of the past that could produce cultural humiliation and legal risk through charges of human rights violations.

In tracing the formation and evolution of memory frameworks and struggles under military rule, I have relied on two key theoretical tools. The first is the idea, mentioned earlier, that we can trace the making of influential memory frameworks by focusing on "memory knots" in society, time, and place. Strongly motivated human groups, symbolically powerful events and anniversary or commemoration dates, haunting remains and places—these galvanize struggles to shape and project into the public cultural domain ways of remembering that capture an essential truth.

The second theoretical tool that informs this study is the idea of "emblematic memory" and its unfolding interaction with the lore of "loose memory." Elsewhere (in trilogy Book One), I have provided a fuller theoretical discussion of the selective and reciprocal interplay between emblematic mem-

ory, a socially influential framework of meaning drawn from experience; and loose memory, a realm of personal knowledge that can remain rather private—socially unanchored—unless people see in it a compelling wider meaning. Emblematic memory draws out the great truths of a traumatic social experience, while loose memory provides a rich lore of raw material useful for the making of emblematic memory. I have also observed the ironies and undersides of memory making and struggles: the emergence of *some* memory lore that circulates and seems to capture an important truth, yet escapes enclosure within major frameworks; and the ways the selective making of memory is simultaneously a making of "silence."[2]

This book applies that theoretical discussion without dwelling on theory as such. Here, however, it may be useful to summarize in what sense memory becomes "emblematic" and thereby feeds into struggles over legitimacy. Memory is the meaning we attach to experience, not simply the recall of the events and emotions of experience. What makes a memory framework influential—what makes it resonate culturally—is precisely its emblematic aspect. Memory struggles about traumatic times that affected or mobilized large numbers of people create a symbolic process that blurs the line between the social and the personal.

In other words, human actors turn social memory and personal memory into a two-way street of influence. On the one hand, an emblematic memory framework imparts broad interpretive meaning and criteria of selection to personal memory, based on experiences directly lived by an individual or on lore told by relatives, friends, comrades, or other acquaintances. When this happens, the mysterious vanishing of "my" son is no longer a story of personal misfortune or accident that floats loosely, disconnected from a larger meaning. The vanishing is part of a crucial larger story: the story of state terror that inflicts devastating rupture upon thousands of families treated as subhuman enemies. My story has become the story of Chile. Personal experience has acquired value as cultural symbol or emblem. The giving of meaning to experience also implies selection. The political wisdom or error of my son's political ideology or choices before 1973 is not so important, compared to the fact of his mysterious abduction by the secret police followed by denial of state knowledge of the abduction.

On the other hand, for those who build a memory framework, seek to establish it as essential truth, and appeal for support and awareness, the varied specific stories and experiences of people are also crucial. The lore of memory that emerges from personal knowledge and individual lives

provides crucial raw material—and testimonial authenticity. Moreover, if people demonstrate the connection between their own lives and a memory framework by "performing" memory in the public domain—for example, through street rallies, protests, pilgrimages, media interviews, or legal petitions—a cultural echo effect becomes visible and adds credibility.

Three features of this book—the two conclusions, the integrative approach to top-down and bottom-up social dynamics, and the chronology of dictatorship compared to the chronology of this book—require brief comment.

The world of Chilean politics, society, and memory struggle changed dramatically between the foundational years of the 1970s (and start of the 1980s), and the years of mass upheaval in the 1980s. In a real sense, the story of memory struggles under the dictatorship is like a story of two countries: a country in the 1970s whose people could rarely challenge the regime openly, a country in the 1980s whose people continuously challenged the regime openly. For this reason (and because an interim conclusion draws out analytical findings useful for the second half), I have treated each period as a story that merits its own conclusions. At the same time, I have specified the links between one period and the other.

A second aspect that requires comment is the integrative approach taken to top-down and bottom-up social dynamics, and the related emphasis on media analysis as such. To write a history of memory struggles under a dictatorship without analytical attention to top-down social dynamics and engineering would be foolish. It would ignore the crucial element—concentrated power at the top, in a regime determined to remake the fundamental rules of society—that defined so many lives and social struggles. To marginalize bottom-up social dynamics would be equally foolish. A central drama of Chile was precisely the story of brave social actors who overcame fear and a police state to force memory struggles and human rights awareness into the public domain. Moreover, precisely because the regime and its critics waged a battle for legitimacy (for hearts and minds), what matters analytically is to see the interactive and mediating aspects of memory struggles within an integrated or holistic analytical framework. Each side's memory struggles bore an intimate relation to the other side's memory claims. And precisely because power was so concentrated at the top, the story of mediating institutions and strategies that might offer a measure of protection—the Catholic Church within the Chilean domestic context, for example, or transnational synergies between human rights reporting on Chile abroad and at home—is

also a vital part of the story and analysis. In short, the history of memory struggles under Pinochet must aspire to a holistic account that attends to dynamics from the top down and bottom up and that attends, as well, to mediating influences. For similar reasons, one will find in this book considerable attention to mass media, a crucial arena of contestation and mediation as well as effort at top-down control.[3]

A final word is in order about chronology. This book is about memory struggles under Pinochet, but it closes in 1988. From a technical point of view, Pinochet did not relinquish the presidency to a civilian president until March 1990. From a substantive point of view, however, the appropriate periodization is different. It made sense to conclude this volume's focus—the history of memory struggles under the dictatorship, and its culminating paradox of Pinochet's simultaneous loss of "soft" control and retention of "hard" control—with the plebiscite of October 1988. The hard jockeying for position that defined the period between October 1988 and March 1990 can be most insightfully studied as prologue to the great drama of the 1990s: the attempt by democratic Chileans to reckon with Pinochet and the memory question in a volatile transitional environment marked by considerable continuity. That story and its consequences into the early twenty-first century are taken up in Book Three of this trilogy.

PART I

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Foundational Years
Building the Memory Box,
1973–1982

Chapter 1

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Chronicling a Coup Foretold?
Previews of the Impossible

It was a dramatic moment in a morning of dramatic moments. Shortly after 8:30 A.M. on Radio Agricultura and within minutes on other stations, General Augusto Pinochet, Admiral José Toribio Merino, General Gustavo Leigh, and General César Mendoza—the commanders of the army, navy, air force, and *carabineros* (police), respectively—issued a proclamation to the nation. In view of Chile's economic, social, and moral crisis; the incapacity of the government to stop chaos; and the civil war that would result from the "constant growth of armed paramilitary groups organized and trained by the political parties of the Unidad Popular," the armed forces and carabineros demanded the surrender of President Salvador Allende. They had agreed "to commence the historic mission of struggling for the liberation of the fatherland from the Marxist yoke, the restoration of order and institutionalism." Radio stations supportive of the Popular Unity government were ordered to suspend informational broadcasts at once. Otherwise, they would "receive punishment by air and land."[1]

That morning of 11 September 1973, the new military junta made good on its word. Within a half hour it had cut transmission by all pro-Allende stations except one, Radio Magallanes. The other stations incorporated themselves into the military broadcast network led by Radio Agricultura. Now President Salvador Allende sat at his desk in La Moneda Palace to say goodbye to the nation and to record the moment for posterity. The president's pace that morning was intense. Consultations with advisors, failed efforts to talk with the coup leaders, appraisals of loyalty and treason in the military and police, planning the defense of a palace attacked by air and land, personal good-byes and telephone calls, decisions about who would leave and who would stay in the palace, brief radio announcements to the nation of events in progress—all competed for his attention as the clock raced toward the 11:00 A.M. ultimatum. If Allende failed to surrender, the warning went,

the air force would begin bombing the palace. Down to one loyal radio station and a useless radio network transmitter, Allende relied on his secretary, Osvaldo Puccio, to link him to Radio Magallanes by telephone. As Puccio held the telephone near his face, Allende improvised a calm and eloquent last address to the nation.[2]

Allende began simply by informing Chileans that this would be his last chance to speak to them, since the air force had already bombed the towers of Radio Portales and Radio Corporación. He moved quickly to matters of loyalty, treason, and History, in the sense of a history that endures and reveals the truth. His words, he hoped, would become "moral punishment to those who have betrayed the oath they took." In the face of treason to the Constitution and its president, Allende understood his duty: "I am not going to resign." He explained: "Placed at a historical turning point, I will pay with my life the loyalty of the pueblo, . . . I am certain that the seed we give to the dignified conscience of thousands upon thousands of Chileans cannot be definitively destroyed. They have the force, they can crush us, but social processes cannot be stopped, not by crime, nor by force. History is ours, and it is made by the people [*los pueblos*]."

Allende calmly thanked those who had been loyal—the workers who placed confidence "in a man who was simply an interpreter of great longings for justice"; the women who as peasants, workers, and mothers supported him; the patriotic middle-class professionals who did not succumb to vitriolic defenses of capitalist privilege; the youths who "sang and offered their joy and spirit of struggle." He assured those destined for persecution that History would judge those who had fomented—directly or by tolerant silence— the fascism prefigured in violent attacks against people, bridges, railroads, and gas and oil pipelines.

An experienced speaker, Allende concluded with a message of hope: History would expose and eventually cut short the betrayal of Chile and its dreams. "I have faith in Chile and its destiny. Other men will overcome this gray and bitter moment, where treason tries to impose itself. May you continue to know that, much sooner than later, the great avenues will again open, where free man can walk to build a better society."

The calm and eloquent way Allende paused to take measure of the historical moment and to improvise a good-bye for posterity has fed the mystique that surrounds his memory. In the late 1990s, many Chileans of the middle-aged and elder generations remembered hearing Allende that morning, remembered their whereabouts and reactions at the defining moment.

Many younger Chileans had heard the speech at demonstrations, on cassette tapes, or on television, or they had seen excerpts or reprints in books, in print media, in flyers, on Web sites, or at his tomb in Santiago.[3]

But did Allende truly improvise this last address? The literal answer is yes. Allende spoke without notes, in the midst of an unrelenting morning pace and crisis. Given his skill and experience as an improvisational speaker, he could certainly formulate an eloquent address at a moment's notice.

At a deeper level, however, it is misleading to think he improvised the speech. The idea of a final crisis with great historical significance had been present from the moment of his election on 4 September 1970. Right away, Allende's personal security became a difficult problem. The intelligence services dismantled an assassination plot involving a member of the ultra-Right group Fatherland and Liberty (Patria y Libertad); another incident apparently led to gunfire. Allende met discreetly with the Christian Democrat Gabriel Valdés and the outgoing president, Eduardo Frei, to appeal for more security. On 25 October, nine days before Allende formally assumed the presidency, the Constitutionalist army commander, General René Schneider, was assassinated in a botched kidnapping designed to block Allende's ascension. As president, especially in the difficult last year, Allende would remind political leaders and Cabinet members that only in a coffin would he leave La Moneda before the end of his constitutional term in 1976. At public rallies, he sometimes intimated that given the difficult political road ahead, loyalty to the pueblo and its struggles might require of him a personal sacrifice—even though his love of life ran the other way. "Without being the martyr type," he would say, "I will not step back." At some level, his mind seemed to return again and again to the possibility that he might have to say a historic farewell.[4]

In many respects the coup of 11 September 1973 was a coup "foretold" since the September 1970 election. Did disaster lurk just around the corner of political time? Could it be prevented? Scripting the disaster meant fierce politicocultural argument not only about how to prevent it but also how to remember and interpret it—how to assign blame, legitimacy, and illegitimacy. This chapter shows that the first emblematic memory framework under military rule, a tale of salvation from ruin and treason, had a prehistory in political struggles during the Allende presidency. It also shows, however, that people had difficulty believing the disaster they predicted. Ideas of Chilean exceptionalism—of a country singular in the Latin American context, because it was essentially democratic, civilized, and respectful

of law and institutions, notwithstanding deep conflicts and social problems —competed with ideas of the apocalypse. The ambivalence remained pertinent even in the last tumultuous year of Allende's government. In sum, Allende had plenty of time to consider how to frame a good-bye for History; yet it was also true that in democratic Chile, previews of disaster could seem like previews of the impossible.

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PRESENTIMENTS OF DISASTER (1):
AMBIVALENT FOREBODING

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The idea that Allende's presidency might culminate in a historic crisis of rule gnawed away everywhere—in the minds of Allende and his supporters and in the minds of opponents and skeptics. Given the controversial and embattled nature of Allende's political project, the rise of this collective presentiment is not difficult to understand. Allende was a minority president who promised to build a socialist revolution by democratic and constitutional means—despite implacable domestic opposition, which translated into legal and extralegal activity; despite ferocious U.S. enmity and its corollary, covert action to undermine governability; and despite splits within the Popular Unity coalition, which fed fears by the opposition, on the viability of a peaceful road to socialism. In Allende's vision, despite the obstacles, Chile could begin a democratic transition to socialism via several changes: legal property transfers, including nationalization of key economic sectors and accelerated agrarian reform; social welfare programs to support workers and the poor; and political and legal backing of workers and peasants in disputes with employers and landowners they considered abusive. The bottom-up property seizures that attended such disputes—partly stoked by activists impatient with Allende's measured legalistic approach to revolution, and aware of his reluctance to repress workers and peasants—added fuel to the political fire. So did extralegal activity, especially street clashes and violence, by right-wing groups. As early as 1970, the outgoing president, Eduardo Frei, privately told Allende he feared a disaster: "You will be president, but you will not be able to control your people, and this can be a catastrophe." The presentiments of the Right—leaders of the National Party, ideologues of such violent action groups as Fatherland and Liberty, media such as *El Mercurio* and Radio Agricultura—were public and apocalyptic. A scare cam-

paign tradition reached back to the 1964 presidential elections, when the Right backed Frei to stop Allende.[5]

The presentiment of disaster, however, always competed with the equally strong idea that Chile differed from the rest of Latin America precisely because its democratic political system was so resilient—so capable of channeling fierce social struggle into electoral competition and state-led problem solving, so protected by a military professional tradition that respected rule by civilians. Allende's promotion of a unique Chilean way (*vía chilena*) to socialism was an extension of this idea. He replied to Frei's alarm with a joke. He turned to Gabriel Valdés, who had arranged the conversation. "Look at him, Gabriel, he's sad because he has lost the presidency. All the ex-presidents believe that once they go, the flood arrives." Frei himself believed in Chilean exceptionalism. He told Allende that if he needed extra security protection from the state, he should get rid of his personal bodyguards "because this is not a tropical country."[6]

In short, the premonition of a disastrous crisis of rule competed with the sense that such a future could not really happen here. Chile was not a "tropical country" where civilian regimes and constitutions always collapsed and dictators and military officers always stepped in. The resilience of a multiparty political system that had long withstood electoral hyperbole, Allende's own background as a parliamentary politician who built a career through electoral campaigning and personal negotiating—these turned the presentiment into a question. A certain quota of disbelief came into play. In a country such as Chile, could a disaster of rule *really* produce a dictatorship by the Right or the Left or the military?

By Allende's last year of rule, the presentiment of disaster had become a stronger political and cultural force: a discourse repeatedly projected into the public domain, a political tool used actively by all sides, a common sense nourished by the reality of a government unable to contain disorder spiraling out of control. By the last months of 1972 and through 1973, economic shortages and strikes, black markets and inflation, had turned truly severe. Price increases soared to triple-digit annual rates. Political differences had turned so vitriolic that Allende could no longer use his political magic to negotiate meaningful accords between "moderate" and *ultra* (maximalist) groups within his Popular Unity coalition, let alone between his government and the Christian Democrats. The prolonged truckers' strike of Octo-

ber 1972 was a turning point. Partly assisted by funding from the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), the strike paralyzed the economy, snowballed into solidarity strikes by business owners and various professional associations and labor groups, and culminated in violent clashes between police and strikers as well as attacks on progovernment trucks and two bombings of the rail line between Santiago and Valparaíso. After October 1972 the precarious distinction between strikes and boycotts motivated by economic protest, and those motivated by aims of political destabilization, finally collapsed. To resolve crises and restore a semblance of order, Allende would rely on Cabinet reshuffles that drew Constitutionalist military officers, including the army commander, General Carlos Prats, into key ministerial posts. The upcoming congressional elections of March 1973 turned into a plebiscite on the Unidad Popular and on how to stop disaster.[7]

When the Popular Unity won 43 percent of the vote—it gained seats in Congress and could easily block a two-thirds vote to impeach Allende—the coming of a decisive crisis of rule seemed obvious. This presentiment was part anxiety and predicament (a perspective common among Allende sympathizers), part hope and expectation (a perspective common in the Right and, increasingly, sectors of the Center and Left), and part political strategy and maneuver (a perspective that included all). The balance depended on one's political point of view and one's degree of worry about a future of massive violence.

Under the circumstances, the politicocultural contentions of 1973 merged into preparation for the coming moment of truth. How to prevail politically, how to win legitimacy, and how to remember for posterity became the order of the day. Ideas of salvation and treason, of ruin and civil war, became the currency of political struggle, a vocabulary for previewing and remembering a disaster that seemed impossible yet seemed to be arriving anyway. Who would save whom, who had betrayed Chile and brought it to the brink of disaster, how to define the nature of the disaster and the needed rescue— these questions varied according to one's political perspective. But a framework for memory and countermemory as a parable of salvation versus ruinous treason was steadily being built by all sides.

To a degree, tropes of violence and salvation had formed a part of Chilean political and cultural contentiousness throughout the Allende period. In a political culture that long included electoral competition and hyperbole, however, such discourses did not automatically harden into imminent over-

whelming worry, nor into one-sided blame. A flash poll of Greater Santiago in September 1972 found that most residents (83 percent) believed the country was experiencing "a climate of violence." Yet even at that late date, anxiety about violence was less than paramount and assignment of responsibilities unclear. Among those affirming a climate of violence, two-fifths (40 percent) laid blame on *both* the government and the opposition, a third (33 percent) blamed the opposition, three-tenths (28 percent) blamed the government. A methodologically more rigorous survey of Greater Santiago, conducted in December 1972 and January 1973, found that residents overwhelmingly named economic issues—the scarcity of goods, inflation, the black market, and the like—as the key problem faced by Chileans. Four-fifths (81.2 percent) named economic issues, only an eighth (13.1 percent) referred to the instability and violence of life—social or political disorder, hatred or physical insecurity, political impasse, and the like. Two-thirds (64.8 percent) declined the invitation to name a second key problem; most who did so listed another economic problem. Only a fourth (23.7 percent) thought a military government would be helpful for Chile.[8]

PRESENTIMENTS OF DISASTER (II): MARCHING TOWARD APOCALYPSE?

The idea of a rendezvous with a dangerous and intractable crisis of rule took on more realism and urgency—seemed more imminent—after the March 1973 elections. Consider the political and cultural framing of three key moments: the botched coup attempt, quickly dubbed the *tancazo* or *tanquetazo* in popular speech, by a renegade army tank regiment that closed in on La Moneda Palace on 29 June; the declaration by the Chamber of Deputies that the Allende government had violated the Constitution on 22 August; and the polemics about civil war and infiltration of the armed forces during the two weeks before the coup.[9]

The tanquetazo affair brought to life the possibility that Chile's political crisis had created conditions for an organized coup uniting the Right with factions of the military. The June coup adventure did not amount to much militarily. Tanks and armored trucks from a regiment commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Roberto Souper converged at about 8:45 A.M. and began firing on La Moneda Palace and the Ministry of Defense, but Constitutionalist troops mounted a defense and the rebels proved isolated. The army

commander, General Carlos Prats, walked over to the treasonous troops and talked them into surrender. By noon the misadventure was over. That afternoon, five leaders of Fatherland and Liberty took refuge in the Ecuadorian Embassy.[10]

Given the profound political stalemate produced by the March elections, how would the failed assault on the presidential palace be interpreted? The splits within the Left and between the Left, Center, and Right were revealing. Even more revealing was their common ground. Every group diagnosed a march toward imminent disaster—even as it disagreed with other groups on who bore responsibility for the crisis, whose interests should be saved or advanced, and how salvation from disaster should proceed. The Christian Democrat leader Radomiro Tomic found a unifying leitmotif amidst the cacophony during June to August. "Like in the tragedies of classic Greek theater," he wrote General Prats, "all *know* what is going to happen, all *say* they do not want it to happen, but each one does exactly what is needed to bring about the misfortune he aims to avoid."[11]

For the Left, the tanquetazo graphically demonstrated the truth of its warnings that the Right had been organizing a crisis of rule to bring together parts of the armed forces, paramilitary action groups such as Patria y Libertad, and a social base for violent takeover to restore capitalist privilege. The result would plunge Chile into a catastrophe: civil war. The only way to stop civil war would be to win it in advance, by organizing such a strong show of organized popular determination to defend the constitutional government that conspirators would find themselves politically cornered and ineffectual. For the Allendista Left, this diagnosis also required a firming up of Constitutionalist leadership within the military, and congressional approval of a temporary state of emergency to allow suspension of normal media and personal liberties to restore calm and to detect and break up armed right-wing conspiracies. It also required a will to negotiate an agreement with Christian Democrats on the most vexing political issue—the rules of the game that would define private, mixed, and social (state) property in the future Chilean economy.

For the more hard-line Left within and outside the government coalition, Allende's diagnosis did not go far enough. Chile had reached a revolutionary crossroads that exhausted its bourgeois legal inheritance. Only if the Left organized *poder popular* (popular power)—for example, worker committees to organize and maintain industrial production, and to defend workplaces against sabotage or invasion—as a parallel power to that of the bourgeois

state would it have the means to discourage civil war, to advance socialist transformation, to reinforce constitutionalism within the military, and, if necessary, to win an armed conflict launched by the Right.

The tension between distinct Left positions about the way to respond to the crisis of rule and the threat of civil war came through on the very day of the tanquetazo. In the morning Allende spoke to the nation by radio and urged his backers to avoid the violence at La Moneda. Remain prepared and alert in homes and workplaces, he urged. Once it became safe for people to converge, Allende called on people to come to an evening rally at the Plaza de la Constitución, which faced La Moneda. There they could show massive support of the constitutional government. Hundreds of thousands assembled. They included people angry about the emerging crisis of rule and eager to express their vision of strategy. As Allende addressed the giant crowd, he faced poster signs and heard rhythmic chants that called for a hard line against those who had abused their liberty to create a crisis. "¡A cerrar, a cerrar, el Congreso Nacional!" (Let's close, let's close, the Congreso Nacional!), "¡Mano dura, presidente!" (A tough hand, president!), and, ominously, "¡Gobierno y pueblo armado, jamás serán aplastados!" (Government and people armed, will never be crushed!).

Allende replied by raising a hand to call for silence, then walked his by now familiar political tightrope.

> The pueblo must understand that I have to remain loyal to what I have said. We will make the revolutionary changes within pluralism, democracy, and liberty, which will not mean tolerance for subversives nor for fascists. . . . I know that what I am going to say will not be to the liking of many of you, but you have to understand the real position of this government. I am not going—because it would be absurd—to close the Congress. I am not going to do it. But if necessary I will send a legislative proposal to convene a plebiscite.

Allende had put his supporters on notice. He agreed that his government and its vision of a transition to socialism within an inherited democratic framework had reached a crisis point, and he agreed that the opposition used all means, including fascistic violence, to undermine authority. But he would not endorse an armed road to revolution nor suspend the Constitution. He would find a solution by continuing to navigate and stretch the inherited institutional framework. If he could not break the stalemate with Congress, he had yet another card to play: a plebiscite as the last best chance

to resolve disputes on the fundamental organization of property rights. He agreed his government needed expressions of organized "popular power" to isolate and defeat those who would overthrow it. But he would not advocate *poder popular* as a parallel power to the state. He could endorse it only as a show of support for an institutionally legitimate project led by an elected president. "Worker comrades of Santiago, we have to organize ourselves! Build and build popular power, but not in opposition to nor independent of the government [i.e., the executive branch], which is the fundamental force the pueblo has to advance."[12]

For the Center and the Right, Chile was also lurching toward disaster. But their leaders dismissed the idea of imminent civil war, calling it an exaggeration to provide cover for intimidation and possible suspension of constitutional guarantees. In May 1973, Roberto Thieme and Pablo Rodríguez of Patria y Libertad had been widely quoted as stating that the National Party and the Christian Democrats failed to constitute a true political alternative. Allende would have to be removed before the end of his term in 1976. The statement was a barely disguised threat of armed rebellion. Luis Corvalán, the Communist Party leader, responded by launching an aggressive verbal campaign to stop civil war. As head of the Christian Democrats, Senator Patricio Aylwin Azócar argued that the campaign against civil war was a manipulation.

> We do not want civil war, but we also do not believe it an imminent danger. . . . The slogan of 'no to civil war' I see as a maneuver to achieve two objectives: to distract public opinion from real problems . . . as a result of government policy failure (scarcity, lines, inflation), and . . . to paralyze . . . opposition action through intimidating psychological pressure, creating the image that any opposition action constitutes a step toward civil war.[13]

A similar perspective framed the reaction to the tanquetazo. Aylwin called Allende at midday to assure him that the Christian Democrats supported the Constitutionalist government and would not back a military adventure. But his party's suspicion that the government would simply take advantage of the crisis to override constitutional constraints and gather political strength dominated, once discussion turned to Allende's proposal that Congress approve a temporary state of emergency. They failed to reach agreement. On the Right, National Party leaders gathered with their president, Senator Sergio Onofre Jarpa, as the morning events unfolded. They smelled a plot to justify a leftist dictatorship. As one put it to a reporter,

As a coup, it was too poorly done. Soldiers study strategy. Even the most dimwit civilian would have thought to seize the radio stations. And why La Moneda, when it is just a building with a bunch of telephones and intercoms and Allende was not even there? Would not the government want to subject the country to a tremendous emotional strain . . . an eruption [enabling it] . . . to tighten its apparatus of repression and open the way to 'popular power'?"[14]

Immediately after the tanquetazo, Chile's newspaper of record and leading media voice of the Right, *El Mercurio*, editorialized along similar lines. Total arrogance and stubbornness not only rendered the government and its parties deaf to the great national majority; they also drove the Left's creation of "all kinds of organizations [that are] extralegal or de facto parallel to those that constitute Chilean institutional structure." The point of a parallel power organized in factories, shantytowns, and the countryside was to allow the government to override the constraints of the legislature and the judiciary by executive decree, by resort to alleged legal loopholes, and by tolerance of extralegal action. The main objective: "to achieve TOTAL POWER."[15]

The implicit message of the Center and Right opposition was that the coming apocalypse would not be a civil war provoked by the Right, nor by its paramilitary ultra groups and its partisans within the military. The real apocalypse would be the economic ruin and political dictatorship created by the Left's drive toward total power. Allende, they maintained, was either too soft and unable to control hard-liners on the Left or too vague and disingenuous in his negotiations and assurances. Frei's prophecy of disaster had become reality. The true threat of violence and repression came from the Left—not merely from the MIR (Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria, Revolutionary Left Movement), the party outside the Unidad Popular coalition that was wedded to direct action as a road to revolution and was critical of Allende's institutional approach, but from within the government.

On 22 August, the Chamber of Deputies formalized this message. A majority of eighty-one to forty-seven, comprised of Right and Center deputies, declared that the government had destroyed Chile's legality. Not only had the executive usurped congressional functions; it had ignored adverse rulings by the judiciary and the Controlaría General de la República (Legal Review Tribunal) and had trampled rights of expression, assembly, and property guaranteed by the Constitution. The diagnosis went further: "The current government of the republic . . . has been undertaking to conquer

total power, with the evident purpose of subjecting all persons to the most strict economic and political control by the state and thereby achieve the installation of a totalitarian system absolutely at odds with the democratic representative system the Constitution establishes." To this end, the executive fostered neighborhood, factory, and agrarian organizations of popular power as a parallel source of power outside legally constituted power; permitted the formation of armed groups that destroyed social order and peace; and sought to politicize military and police forces by tolerating infiltration by party activists and by incorporating officers in Cabinet reshuffles.

The dramatic result: Chile had arrived at "the grave breakdown of the constitutional and legal order of the Republic."[16]

As important as the content of the resolution was its symbolism—its designated recipients and the media events that immediately preceded and followed it. The declaration of breakdown was addressed to the president of the republic *and* to the four Cabinet ministers drawn from the military and carabineros. It advised that these ministers, as a condition of their service, should put an immediate end to the trampling of law and constitutionalism. "Otherwise," the declaration warned, "the national and professional character of the armed forces and carabinero corps would be gravely compromised." General Prats, both the army commander and defense minister, thought some sectors of the military would read the vote as "a blank check endorsed by the Parliament." The next day, Prats—viewed as a Constitutionalist firmly committed to the survival of the Allende government, and subject to an intense buildup of pressure by army generals and their wives that he leave his post—resigned as the defense minister and army commander. Allende tried to persuade Prats to reconsider, but he relented when Prats explained that for him to continue would provoke dangerous splits and insubordination. Allende would have to fire twelve to fifteen subordinate generals to maintain Prats's authority, "and that measure would precipitate civil war." General Augusto Pinochet Ugarte, presumably a loyal Constitutionalist, replaced Prats as the army commander.[17]

The media events that accompanied the resolution also fostered the idea of a society brought to such a point of disaster that only a higher force could establish control. The day before the vote, street fighting occurred during a march by National Party youth before Congress. The clash included gunfire, and the wounded included National Party militants. The opposition media portrayed the incident as one more outrageous example of uncontrolled Left violence; the progovernment media portrayed it as one more outrageous

attempt by Right militants, through shootings at passers-by and violent clashes with police, to provoke a climate of fear and chaos. The night before the vote, sounds of bombings and gunfire in upper-class and middle-class neighborhoods of Santiago created "a night of terror."[18]

Step by step, the country moved toward a framework of remembering the coming moment of truth as a struggle to find salvation from disaster. Front-page newspaper headlines and photos screamed out themes of violence and treason. The differences lay in who held the responsibility. "Bloody Marxist Shooting" competed against "Momio Terror!" (*momio* was slang for reactionary). "The Government Has Gravely Broken the Constitution" competed with "The House Embarks on Sedition."[19]

Following the congressional declaration and on into September, spectacular media reports fueled the sense of a society teetering on the edge of a great insurrection or a great repression, and of a military tipping toward turmoil and consternation. Frightening reports of alleged leftist infiltration of the navy competed against intense exposés of the high command's torture of Constitutionalist sailors accused of insubordination. Spectacular reports alleged that air force and navy units enforcing Chile's Arms Control Law had discovered a "guerrilla school" at Nehuentúe in the agrarian South. The reports also alleged these units had discovered large stores of arms that converted factories into fortresses and converted the countryside into a paramilitary-organizing ground. Such reports competed against exposés about repressive *golpista* (pro-coup) officers who used the Arms Control Law as a pretext to torture alleged witnesses and co-conspirators and to identify and repress leftists, trade union activists, and peasants.[20]

The reports that made violence seem more imminent coincided with an alarming turn in the economic crisis. Allende announced that for the second week of September, bread rations would be very tight in Santiago. The stock of flour had dwindled to only a few days' supply. Massive import of wheat flour—1.5 million tons were needed for the rest of 1973—was urgent, but problems of money, port infrastructure, and transportation would not be easily resolved. Bombings on the highway out of the port of San Antonio (a sector controlled by the army lieutenant colonel Manuel Contreras, the future commander of the secret police) had blocked a shipment of 45,000 tons of wheat.[21]

By September the polemics about infiltration of the armed forces added an explosive dimension to the idea of civil war. Allende and the Left had relied

on the idea that army and other military Constitutionalists would oppose the pro-coup officers, especially if loyal officers perceived that substantial sectors of the populace were totally determined to back the government and that some would use arms to resist a coup. From this perspective, the deferential Pinochet seemed a safe replacement for Prats, and a certain plausibility of civil war—that armed conflicts would break out if the Right and golpista officers organized a coup—could seem a useful strategy. Presumably, the specter of bloodletting would harden the will of military Constitutionalists and provide Allende leverage over the ultra factions of the Unidad Popular. It would also bolster the sense of urgency needed to reach an accord with the Christian Democrats or to launch a plebiscite as an alternate political solution. By September, however, chances for such a scenario fell apart. Military forces and police were moving toward political deliberation by high officers, toward realignments of high commands to marginalize those who staked their destiny on constitutionalism, and toward allegations of infiltration and insubordination in the ranks instigated by the leaders of the three radical Left parties: the Socialist Carlos Altamirano; Oscar Guillermo Garretón, leader of the MAPU (Movimiento de Acción Popular Unitaria, Movement of Unified Popular Action—originally a leftist splinter from the Christian Democrats); and Miguel Enríquez, leader of the MIR.

On Sunday, 9 September, Altamirano spoke to a Socialist rally at a soccer stadium and publicly called on Socialists and workers to stop *golpismo* (pro-"coupism") and, if necessary, win the coming war. "The Party is determined to confront any struggle and win." He declared that he had indeed met with sailors and noncommissioned officers concerned about pro-coup organizing in the navy and was willing to do so again.[22]

The tanquetazo affair, the congressional declaration of political tyranny and illegitimacy in August, the street clashes and sounds of violence and the frightening media spectacles that accompanied them, the struggle for the daily bread, the apparent struggle to control the military from within: one sensational event followed another and seemed to point to a conclusion. Chile had reached its long-scripted climax.

CONFUSION: AN UNBELIEVABLE REALITY?

The long-predicted impossible moment had arrived—or had it? As late as 10 September, Allende still believed that calling for a plebiscite could buy some

political time and allow, if necessary, an honorable way to accept defeat and step down. He needed a bit more time to clear the path—to lobby the Unidad Popular parties to avoid a split on the plebiscite issue, to call Christian Democrats and appeal for agreement on a constitutional reform delineating property rights, and to review language with legal analysts. Last attempts to achieve political accord—within the Unidad Popular, let alone between the Center and Left—failed. Whether a plebiscite could have provided a successful exit to such a deep political crisis remains a touchy and debatable point—in part because the coup rendered it moot. Allende resolved to announce the plebiscite on the eleventh, both to head off the coup and to preempt the Christian Democrats. Their search for a political solution to the crisis took the form of a challenge that Allende and all members of Congress resign so that elections could bring about a renovation and steer Chile away from ruin and impasse. The Christian Democrats planned to hold a mass rally to promote this version of a solution on 13 September.[23]

The paradoxical aspect of the final weeks of crisis was that even as the idea of salvation from a coming disaster crystallized and grew urgent, the idea that Chilean politics was uniquely resilient did not quite die. True dictatorships and heavy-handed repression, civil wars and blood baths, could not really happen here. Some kind of political solution tied to Chile's legal-electoral path might yet be invented and accepted. The impossible future had arrived, yet it remained impossible. Chile had reached a state of economic ruin and violent political confrontation, but did the crisis of governance truly outstrip Chileans' customary ability to find solutions through elections and elite political negotiation? The idea of a Chilean body politic that was ever resilient and negotiable competed with the idea of a Chile that teetered on the edge of apocalypse.[24]

The result was considerable confusion when the long-predicted moment of truth arrived. Consider three questions: First, was the coup *really* happening? Even leftists wondered. A woman who worked in the cultural section of the Santiago office of CODELCO, the national copper company, answered the telephone in the director's office the morning of the coup. It was the direct line from the Chuquicamata mines; the caller wanted to verify what was happening in Santiago. When she told him the situation was truly grave—tanks facing La Moneda, transit impossible, radios intervened—he turned incredulous. "You're exaggerating, *compañera* [comrade], how can that be? Is there a Communist *compañero* there?" She tried to convince him until the line went dead. At the Sumar textile factory in Santiago, workers and politi-