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The Shadow of Pinochet over Chile

José Antonio Gutiérrez D.

December 18, 2006

With the corpse of Pinochet, they think they can bury all those dead standing in the way. But in order to erase the face of Pinochet from the face of Chile, they should do what they did in the past with the ancient kings: he should be buried with all of its belongings –his army, his State, his innumerable pages of laws and his Constitution. His death is only making obvious the various contradictions in today’s Chile.

He died because he had to, because we all have to. That tyrant that thought he was invincible, the one that said that in our country not a single leaf moved without him knowing it, the one of the dark specs and those spooky speeches addressing the nation, he was taken away by the grim reaper. Our feelings about this are very confusing: on the one hand, we are glad to know that we don’t have to keep inhabiting the same world with such a heinous figure, nor breathing the same air. But we have a bitter feeling as we know that he passed away without being tried, protected by his amnesty laws and the governments of the ruling coalition, “la Concertación”. They remained always faithful to that pact with

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which they negotiated their power share. Let us remember that no one forced them to rush to London, back in 1998, to give a hand to their generalissimo, when he was facing some serious trouble. With not a trace of shame, they were the real protectors of the people's murderer. We will never forget that "la Concertación" as an accomplice bear in their own consciousness the weight of thousands dead.

It has been them, the ruling coalition (including the Socialist party), that has been administering the institutions inherited by Pinochet, his State, his Constitution, his economic model. They are the ones who have resorted to his legacy of repressing the people in struggle and the mapuche indians. They are the ones who have grown rich with neoliberalism, which was founded with bullets and blood. They are the ones. And maybe because of that they are the ones that have more reasons than anyone else to be happy. Because the old crook is dead, because he's no longer a problem for them, because it represents no longer their dark consciousness, because there is one reason less for all those nasty human rights' lawyers to give them hassle. Because the living proof of the crime upon which the institutions of our country are founded is gone; institutions that they happily administer, by the way. He was gone without a trial but who are we trying to deceive? Not even in a thousand years time, if he was going to live that long, he would have been tried by "La Concertación". He's gone never to be tried, that's why I suppose they might be so happy.

With the corpse of Pinochet, they think they can bury all those dead standing in the way. But in order to erase the face of Pinochet from the face of Chile, they should do what they did in the past with the ancient kings: he should be buried with all of its belongings –his army, his State, his innumerable pages of laws and his Constitution. His death is only making obvious the

various contradictions in today's Chile.

Some say that he is a dividing figure in the country: but he was only making too evident the division that has always existed between the elites and the riff raff, division that is reflected dramatically in a political system that works as a gigantic machine to exclude and marginalise 90% of the population.

President Bachelet said she would be shocked to give official State honours to the tyrant. But if she were being honest, she would have given him State honours: after all, it is she who is at the head of Pinochet State. Whether she likes it or not, she's his successor. She should, at least, be kind enough for that little favour. Otherwise, if she is not to be the heir of the butcher, let her be coherent and put forward the extermination of the institutions inherited by the dictator, or at least, their democratic reform. This ambivalence between supervised democracy and authoritarianism has given to the Chilean capitalist class its particular flavour for the last three decades.

Though Pinochet is dead, his shadow will remain haunting us, what a pity for the traitors and opportunistic ones in "la Concertación". His legacy is alive in our country, and its living personification is the army and the counter-insurgency State. But above all, it is the dual power that the army holds in practice. It is no coincidence that the Chilean flags were waving half mast in the barracks, but not in the rest of the State buildings. This happens because they are not subordinated to the civil powers and they do what they want. Whenever they feel like it, they might kick out any other government that might become "too radical". Those half mast flags represent the supremacy of the military over the executive (something typical of dependent countries where the weakness of the bourgeoisie is compensated through the strength

of the military).

Pinochet was condemned long ago by the entire world, something in Chile “la Concertación” was not able to do. Even the White House, referring to the death of Pinochet, took some distance from this psycho they put in power and hypocritically declared that their sorrow lied with the victims of his bloody reign. He had even to ask pathetically for his corpse to be incinerated, to avoid his tomb being desecrated. The sole sincere friend he ever seemed to have was Margaret Thatcher, both of them being made out of the same fabric, the Iron Lady. She seemingly was the only person to express sadness for his decease.

Well, of course, apart from the military and a number of pathetic ladies waving flags outside the Military Hospital. They said that 60,000 people went to see his coffin (including one person that conveniently spat it and three nutcases that did the nazi salute); this was completely outnumbered by the funeral, last year of his arch-enemy during the 80s, the general secretary of the Communist Party, Gladys Marín, who was visited by around 1,000,000 people.

In the slums of Chile, a bit of happiness was felt, a bit of frustration and a bit of anger: after all, those are the elements that constitute the soul of our generation, a generation that grew under the military boots, the ones that had to put up with his speeches, those who learnt to read and write under that grey sky. Those of us, as an anarchist paper said angrily in the 80s, who did our first communion and masturbated for the first time under Pinochet. That generation developed its senses with the heinous sight of the military in commando dress on the streets, with the sound of bullets and empty pots, with a bitter taste in the mouth -impotence and anger-, with the heat of the barricades felt on its skin, and with the smell of the barricade’s smoke and of tear gas

bombs. This generation learnt that its natural political space was in the street and learnt to struggle since a very young age.

We felt, as I said, a bit of joy and anger. Joy, because they die and we will live forever. Joy because without rotten people like him, there’s an actual space for a new world. Joy just for the sake of it, for it seemed that this crook was going to stay forever haunting our country. And anger, for he was gone without a trial and without receiving the news of our victory to come. So who is now going to take away from us that bitter taste after all the victims who were left behind claiming for justice, and our people were left beaten, alienated, repressed, impoverished, drowning in debts and want in the middle of the Chilean “Economic Miracle”? Who, comrade? The people and no one but the people. And how are they going to do it? Struggling, creating the people’s power. The struggle keeps going on and victory belongs to us.