
EVENTS THAT MARKED HISTORY: 9/11 in Chile

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The *coup d'état* that took place in Chile on September 11, 1973, is still an open wound for the South American nation and a shame for Latin America. It is also a lesson in what we cannot admit, as well as the rights we must won and maintain.

Let us all remember that fifty years ago, Augusto Pinochet established a dictatorship that murdered over 3,000 Chileans, in addition to the more than 1,000 people still missing, who were previously taken into custody by State agents, most of them due to their leftward trend.

These figures show that it was a military rebellion that allowed crimes against humanity and where human rights were constantly violated throughout 17 years. It was an event with huge impact in the region, denounced in every forum and condemned in the most renowned international organizations.

Forget is forbidden. That is why we recalled the events.

From 1973 to 1990, Chile experienced fear, repression, and violence. All these mutilated entire families. The imprint of the Pinochet dictatorship reached everyone and today, it is still impossible to talk about that period without resentment. For too long, it was a harassed, depressed, suffering people, who went from having a democratically elected government - that of the socialist Salvador Allende (1970-1973) - to suffer a totalitarian regime that not only persecuted those who had progressive thinking, but also murdered opponents, tightened its hold in power without the possibility of elections, manipulated the press, and eliminated unions and parties with alternative tendencies.

Freedom was slaughtered, preceded by a deep economic and social crisis exacerbated by far-right positions, plus foreign alliances, with the aim of disgusting the Allende government, which a thorn that struck deep in a short period of time. For this reason, that government was destabilized and pushed to the limit. The *coup d'état* was also an example of betrayal and arbitrariness.

Half a century later, we evoke the victims, who number thousands among political prisoners, dead, injured, missing, exiled, and their families, and we extend our hand to them so that they will never be alone again. We recapitulate what they experienced so that episodes like this one, lacking democracy, cannot be repeated again, and we condemn any event that resembles a bloody dictatorship like that one.

In addition to the official Government ceremony at the La Moneda Palace, each year there are days of activities such as public demonstrations, cultural presentations, guided visits to former detention and torture centers, seminars to reflect and listen to testimonies, masses and pilgrimages to where the remains of the located victims

rest.

These and other actions aiming to correct in a symbolic way those fallen by the dictatorship are carried out, as well as theoretical meetings where history is analyzed and the last speech of President Allende is recalled:

I am not going to resign!

Placed in a historic transition, I will pay for loyalty to the people with my life. And I say to them that I am certain that the seed which we have planted in the good conscience of thousands and thousands of Chileans will not be shriveled forever.

The people must defend themselves, but they must not sacrifice themselves.

Beyond the polarized interpretations of events, the political differences, the rifts, the legacy and the distrust in the current projects and in the different governments that have succeeded since 1990, a large part of Chileans agree in denying that past event that fractured society, and bears the shadow of the dictatorship that remains latent, five decades later. The majority continues to seek justice and an end to impunity because there are still many gaps to clarify facts and culprits without trial or conviction. What's more, Pinochet, the mastermind, died without punishment in 2006. And that is unforgivable.

Translated by Sergio A. Paneque Díaz / CubaSí Translation Staff
