Foreword

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On 8 December 1982, as the life-and-death drama of military dictatorship in Chile continued on for a tenth year, the moment had arrived for the writer Gabriel García Márquez to deliver his Nobel Prize lecture to the Swedish Academy in Stockholm.[1] The dictatorship headed by General Augusto Pinochet had begun on 11 September 1973 with the bombing of the presidential palace, while the elected president, Salvador Allende, remained inside. Allende had promised a democratic path to a socialist revolution that captured the imagination of democratic socialists and radicals across different parts of the world, including Europe. He had garnered thunderous applause after eloquently putting forth his vision and his struggle against the odds, including imperialism, in an address to the United Nations General Assembly in December 1972. On that day of extreme crisis, he refused a surrender ultimatum, preferring to die under assault after delivering a radio address of loyalty to workers and the *pueblo*, rather than seek an escape into the comfortable life of an exiled former ruler.

The spectacular visual image of the palace engulfed in flames and smoke captured the violent force of the coup, quickly circulated in world media, and—along with reports of mass imprisonment and execution—provoked the sense of consternation and urgency that inspires solidarity. In the 1970s the Chilean emergency galvanized networks that crossed Europe's Cold War boundaries of East versus West, from Italy and France to East Germany and the Soviet Union. Even in the Americas, the fate of Chileans catalyzed mobilization and political influence in rich countries of the North as well as poorer countries of the South—in the United States and Canada as well as Mexico and Venezuela. In the United Nations the violence of the Chilean dictatorship sparked a special Ad Hoc Working Group on the Situation of Human Rights in Chile. Annual General Assembly resolutions of disapproval drew wide support, not

only from Soviet bloc countries but also Western Europe and most of the Third World.[2]

In sum, in the making of an international culture of human rights, Chile was a key force, both as symbol of a wider cause and as transnational learning experience through networking and mobilization. The networks often included exiled Chileans themselves. The Chilean emergency inspired new forms of transnational consciousness, testimony, and insistence on human rights. Put differently, relative to its demographic and economic size, Chile acquired an outsized significance as icon. It was not simply the image of the bombing of the palace that circulated and inspired constant reproduction. It was also Pinochet himself, stiff-backed in dark glasses shortly after the junta took power, who turned into the visual symbol of a wider controversy and malevolence. Pinochet stood not only for the Chilean emergency, but also for the problem of "dirty war" dictatorships that spread more generally across South America. In Argentina, Uruguay, and Brazil, as well as Chile, dictatorial regimes engaged in projects of policide, a killing off of the earlier polity and retraining of citizens, through shockingly violent and fearsome determination to stamp out forever ways of imagining and doing politics through democratic mobilization and direct action.[3] Pinochet and the Chile he ruled stood not only for Latin American malevolence but also US complicity, especially notorious under the Nixon–Kissinger regime, with evil in the name of anti-Communism. Moral awakenings related to human rights emergencies in the 1970s owed much to the impact of Chile.

As the moment approached for Gabriel García Márquez to speak on a world stage in Stockholm, then, there were many reasons to remember Chile. That nation's epic struggle and catastrophe—the arc from democratic experiment to ruthless suppression, accompanied by a connecting David vs. Goliath story, in which Goliath (US) emerged triumphant—had acquired significant general resonance in international culture. But there were also some specific reasons to remember Chile in Stockholm. In the wake of the coup, the Scandinavian countries and Swedish Ambassador Harald Edelstam, particularly, had taken leading roles as hosts for Chileans seeking asylum and in the formation of early transnational networks of solidarity and mock tribunals placing the military junta on trial for its crimes. The junta declared Ambassador Edelstam *persona non grata* in December 1973. Also, the last Nobel Prize for Literature awarded to a Latin American had honored the great Chilean poet Pablo Neruda, a Communist and supporter of Allende. Neruda delivered his Nobel address in Stockholm in 1971, a year when Allende's experiment with a democratic path to a socialist revolution had chalked up some

early political and economic successes and perhaps had a fighting chance to succeed.

Beyond the Scandinavian connection, moreover, the experiences of "dirty war" in Latin America had not let up. Central America was in flames. In Nicaragua, "contra" guerrillas supported by the United States invaded from Honduras to bleed the Sandinista revolution. In El Salvador and Guatemala, ruthless regimes engaged in scorched-earth raids against peasant and Indian communities as well as social justice activists. Meanwhile, the United States had moved from Carter to Reagan, and history had turned as if in a circle, back to the Nixon–Kissinger alignment with violent brutality and lawlessness.

Given the political emergencies, then, the writer could not escape the role of ambassador. So after García Márquez hooked his audience with a review of the "staggering" narratives of colonial and seafaring times that seem fantasy yet were actually depictions of "our reality of that age," he moved forward toward the present. Since the time when Neruda had spoken here, he observed, "We have not had a moment's rest. A promethean president, entrenched in his burning palace, died fighting an entire army, alone. . . ." The allusion to Chile and Allende, so well known to his audience, was the beginning of an eloquent review of a human reality too extreme to be believed, yet unfolding relentlessly in South and Central America. "I dare to think that it is this outsized reality, and not just its literary expression, that has deserved the attention of the Swedish Academy of Letters." That reality bred creativity as well as hurt, but it also created a special problem for writers. "Poets and beggars, musicians and prophets, warriors and scoundrels, all creatures of that unbridled reality, we have had to ask little of imagination, for our crucial problem has been a lack of conventional means to render our lives believable."

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The magnitude of what was at stake in Chile in 1973 and under the state terror regime that followed somehow resonated in world culture. Human actors from Chile and many other countries found the story moving, outrageous, and irresistible at a time when human rights awareness itself was taking a new turn in world culture. Allende, Pinochet, and Chile as epic symbols, accompanied by the real-life testimonies of many ordinary people and activists in exile and by the emergence of transnational activist networks, provided means to make the outrageousness and the urgency believable. The world-culture impact of Chile—resurrected during

the precedent-setting arrest of Pinochet in London in 1998 on charges of crimes against humanity, under the legal theory of universal jurisdiction—is one reason this book matters, forty years after the original bombing and coup.

Another reason is that inside Chile itself, the politics of memory proved fundamental to the making of political legitimacy and illegitimacy, both under military rule in the 1970s and 1980s and during the vexed democratic transition of the 1990s and beyond. Chile has been a society profoundly divided about the facts and meaning of what transpired in 1973 and under military rule, yet widely aware that the crisis of 1973 was foundational. The military regime enjoyed a substantial social base of support, probably a majority at the outset, and engaged in a profound remaking of political, social, and economic life. In addition, the regime and its secret police engaged in denial and misinformation to dispute the factual reality of state terror including executions, disappearances (abductions that vanished citizens permanently), and torture of prisoners. In a real sense, misinformation sought to disappear from culture and memory not only the persons abducted and mysteriously gone but also the victims and facts of repression more generally.

Under the circumstances, "memory struggles" to define the true and fundamental facts that could not be forgotten, as well as their meaning for present and future, worked their way into politics and public culture, even under the dictatorship of 1973–1990. For the regime and its supporters, human rights violations were occasional "excesses" by individuals, not systematic state policy. They were far less prevalent than claimed by critics, and they were the understandable, albeit regrettable, by-products of the effort to bring modern progress to a society while stamping out threats by those who had brought society to the edge of civil war under Allende. For critics, the point was precisely the state terror that ruptured life in so many families and tore apart the social fabric—and that was cruelly compounded when the violence of the wound was met with denial. For the human rights camp struggling against the odds, memory—that which must not be forgotten—raised issues that were moral and existential as well as political.

Memory was a value closely aligned with the sense of reckoning that haunted the democratic transition—the coming to terms with long-denied truth and justice in ways that undergirded the legitimacy and staying power and fundamental values of democratic transition, notwithstanding continuing divisions over the legacy of Pinochet's regime and notwithstanding his continuing power as army commander until March 1998. As this book's editors astutely observe, in dialogue with political science as a field of study, what the politics of memory offers conceptu-

ally is analytical awareness that "the relations of both voice and silence" require attention to understand the difficult rebirthing of democratic polities after atrocity, precisely because collective memories proved "both foundational to and constitutive of collective political identities."

Put differently, the epic quality of the Chilean story—the struggle for survival of the Allende experiment, followed by the life-and-death struggles of families under a dictatorship embarked on policide—played out inside Chile and its remaking of political culture, not just abroad. The official story under military rule was one of heroic memory—a narrative of soldier-saviors who saw the ruin of society and the threat of a bloodbath by the left and who reluctantly but patriotically responded to the clamor of a populace in need of salvation. In the weeks that immediately followed the coup, the new regime mounted a spectacular propaganda campaign of revelations about "Plan Z": an alleged leftist conspiracy under Allende to install a dictatorship, with foreign assistance, through a massacre of military officers massed for Independence Day celebrations and followed up with assassinations of leaders in politics and civil society. Secret weapons arsenals, guerrilla training camps, war clinics and hospitals, underground tunnels and storage depots, and assassination lists targeting key people and their families throughout the country turned into a staccato of chilling revelation. When Pinochet delivered an address to the nation to mark the one-month anniversary of the coup, all understood the allusion at the heart of heroic memory: "The sinister plans to massacre a people that did not accept their ideas had been prepared by underground means. Foreign countries sent weapons and mercenaries of hate to fight us. However, the hand of God made itself present to save us, a few days before consummation of the crime." A heroic memory of salvation, and the linked idea of a continuing war against an underground enemy determined to rise up from defeat, proved crucial to the legitimacy and social base of support of the regime and to the creation of a free hand for the secret police. The Plan Z allegations do not stand up under historical scrutiny, but many people believed them at the time and remembered them as "true" years later.

Allende, on his last day, also understood that memory would prove crucial to the future. In his last radio address, transmitted via the one loyal radio tower the air force had not yet bombed, he took the measure of the moment. His words would become "moral punishment to those who have betrayed the oath they took," and he would not end constitutional government by resigning. "Placed at a historical turning point, I will repay with my life the loyalty of the people [*pueblo*]." He was sure "that the seed we give to the dignified conscience of thousands upon thousands of Chileans cannot be definitively destroyed." The violent

force would in the end prove transitory, because "social processes cannot be stopped. . . . History is ours, and it is made by the people [*los pueblos*]."

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Yet if the violence and magnitude of the 11 September 1973 crisis, and the political awareness of the actors themselves, ensured that the politics of memory would prove decisive to the future, no one could foresee the irony that would ensue in the long run. The epic moment gave rise to heroic memories and countermemories, but it also marked a turn toward post-heroic conceptions of politics.

Heroic memory did not come from nowhere. Since the 1930s Latin America and Chile had passed through a time of heroic political conceits. These attached to both the idea of the state and the idea of the *pueblo*. Each would bring about transformation—uplift to a society in need of redemption. New kinds of political leaders, from populists to revolutionaries, would sweep away the legacy of rule by a small oligarchy and its corollary, social backwardness and injustice. The leader-heroes would usher in an era of political inclusion and material advance for the nation's once excluded and exploited people—the workers, the urban poor including rural-to-urban migrants, the peasants, and the struggling lower-middle-class sectors who together constituted the *pueblo,* the social majority of humble people historically denied a just pact with the state and elites. Such sectors comprised *lo popular*, the modest people at the root of the authentic historical nation yet whose day of fulfillment had long been postponed. State support of wage advances and trade union influence, housing and health access, and land reform and affordable prices for basic commodities, along with state-led industrialization projects and tax and credit policy to promote import-substitution, would yield a new society with a new social pact—not only a social welfare-and-development state but also a kind of romance between the heroic leader and the *pueblo.* In some countries the new kind of state was indeed personified in a major leader who rose to prominence, built a new state architecture, and left an enduring imprint: Lázaro Cárdenas of Mexico in the 1930s and Juan Domingo Perón of Argentina in the 1940s are the most famous examples. In Chile the new kind of engaged state (*estado de compromiso*) emerged out of Popular Front coalition politics of center and left in the late 1930s and out of a culture of competitive multiparty elections. By the 1960s, however, the

heroic state also came to be embodied in two rival leaders who captured popular imagination: Christian Democrat Eduardo Frei Montalva, elected president in 1964, and Socialist Salvador Allende, elected president in 1970. Each promised a revolution.

Yet the idea of heroic action to lift up a nation did not accrue only to state leaders and did not reduce to a top-down vision of social change. Simultaneously, and especially on the left, the idea of the *pueblo* creating the nation's new future also assumed heroic dimensions. The popular sectors long victimized and excluded by History had nonetheless forged their own histories of resistance and mobilization. In the twentieth century, their combativeness, organizing, and struggle for social rights had finally gained effective political expression and would finally yield results. When Allende said goodbye in his eloquent radio speech, he addressed workers, the ultimate symbol in this conception, and thanked them for placing their confidence "in a man who was simply an interpreter of great longings for justice." He was as much servant as hero. He went on to address others: the women who supported him in their roles as peasants, workers, and mothers; the patriotic sectors of middle-class professionals; the youths who "sang and offered their joy and spirit of struggle." As Allende understood from the direct-action seizures that reshaped factory life and ownership, the agrarian reform process, and the urban housing landscape during his presidency, the project to transform Chile was both a bottom-up affair, led by social and political activists who saw themselves as leaders of a determined *pueblo,* and a top-down affair, led by an elected president navigating legality and negotiations with Congress. The two dynamics had proved very difficult to reconcile. But when Allende assured his radio listeners that their combined effort would one day triumph—"History is ours, and it is made by *los pueblos*"—they knew what he meant. The makers of the great transformation that would someday arrive would be popular social actors, not merely political leaders.

When the experiment of democratic socialist transformation turned into a nightmare, the new wielders of state power also saw themselves as heroes embarked on a great transformation. They would undo the excesses of a democracy gone wild, retrain the suffering populace into a model of tutelary and technocratic governance, and come around to an altogether new conception of the relationship between state, society, and economy. The economic role of the state would be radically scaled back, and the citizen would find self-actualization as a consumer emancipated from the state, not as a bearer of economic rights negotiated with the state through group organizing and political mobilization.

In sum, the state simultaneously promoted policide and the neoliberal economic revolution. Chile was the world's vanguard state, not only as a leader in the political battle against world Communism but also as the forerunner of an economic revolution later promoted and generalized by Reagan and Thatcher. Put differently, the defenders of social privilege in the era of Frei and Allende had also participated in the political culture that gave rise to heroic conceits—but from the opposite end, with alarm about the experiments tearing down the proper social order. By attaching their destiny to an anti-Communist crusade, led by soldiers who would rescue society from ruin and bloodbath, conservative social forces regained the initiative and built an alternative heroic memory.

In the case of Chile, whose dictatorship was the most personalized of all the policide regimes that spread across South America in the 1960s and 1970s, the political hero had a name and turned into an icon at home and abroad: General Augusto Pinochet. For a quarter-century, first as leader of the military junta that ruled Chile during 1973–1990, then as the army commander whose constitution constrained democratic transition and did not allow elected civilian presidents to remove him during 1990–1998, Pinochet was the focal point of the effort to drape military rule in a politics of heroic memory. Providence had selected him to save Chile.

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Political heroes fall back to earth, and short-term consequences do not always align with long-term effects. The irony of memory politics in Chile is that the heroic memories and countermemories that defined the 1973 crisis moment could not endure without suffering a new transformation.

However, the world changed. The crusading metanarratives that defined political projects during the era of Cold War and Third World Revolution in the mid-to-late twentieth century gave way to new paradigms of politics and thought: the neoliberal restructuring of global economics, the rise of social movements less tethered to political party conceptions, the postmodern skepticism about metanarrative in general, the far less statist conceptions of the social good, and global rights advocacy. Put differently, when skepticism undermines the politics of megatransformation, a new kind of appreciation may arise for the leader who refrains from promising a revolution but also carries on persistently to accomplish the social good, in a manner consistent with professed val-

ues, notwithstanding constraints and the inherent frustrations of incremental change. Chile has not been immune from this paradigm shift. Yet as this book shows so well, the shift did not prevent forward motion, driven in large measure by determined civil society actors, on human rights and memory politics.

The long-term irony deepens when considering the central public policy issues that define political agendas and contention. As I have argued elsewhere, even as the politics of human rights memory gained traction, reshaped cultural sensibilities, and broke new ground by addressing torture issues systematically during 2003–2004 and beyond, the cumulative advances in memory politics and human rights are in some ways illusory. Such advances do not imply a continuing central place on the political agenda. During the administration of Michelle Bachelet (2006–2010), the politics of memory stretched to new issues in powerful ways—not only the classic human rights violations against integrity of life, body, and psyche of victims but also other legacies of the dictatorship including policies shaping educational opportunity, socioeconomic inequality, and retirement income. At the same time, the central public policy issues in play did not reduce to memory politics as traditionally understood or practiced. Urban mass transport, gender equality, birth control access for young poor women, economic reserves for spending to mitigate the world financial meltdown, massive hydroelectric investment projects, indigenous community rights—these and other issues shaped the agenda and political legitimacy. Bachelet finished her presidency with high popularity, not only because she was closely identified with a politics of human rights but also because she engaged new issues. Equally important, she projected a style—a dialogical president more interested in collaborative citizen participation in public life than in party politics—well suited for a post-heroic political age.

The irony of 1973, then, was that it generated heroic memory and countermemory but at the same time unleashed a long-term transformation—in state-society-economy relations on the one hand, in the tenor of civic life and public policy agendas on the other—that eventually undermined heroic political conceits. Chile did not exist as an isolated political island during a world transition toward post-heroic politics and the collapse of projects shaped by intersections of Cold War and Third World Revolution. Arguably, however, the contradictory dynamics were particularly intense in Chile. The 1973 crisis generated a powerful hero-dictator cult and the struggle to eviscerate it, and at the same time paved the way for Chile to become an early laboratory of neoliberal shock policy to restructure state, economy, and society.

However, it was not only the long-term structural trends that brought the eventual demise of heroic memory. Pinochet as political hero also fell back to earth for very specific reasons. The combined effect of new revelations of human rights abuses, shocking corruption scandals, and criminal litigation abroad and at home turned him toxic—an albatross even for his own shrinking loyalist base. Pinochet went from frying pan to fire after his return from house arrest in London to Chile in 2000. Particularly during 2004 to 2006, the discovery of large foreign bank accounts incompatible with the image of the austere self-sacrificing patriot, and a series of criminal indictments and human rights revelations, sparked embarrassment and political liability that drove even some of his own base away. To preserve and defend the legacy of military rule—and in particular the economic policies that had reshaped the structure of property, income, and life opportunities—required depersonalizing the military regime. To defend the regime required more than ever that one draw distance from the leader who now seemed exposed as a *mafioso*, responsible for human rights crimes as well as secret self-enrichment, rather than a hero. For those who had been Pinochet's partisans and loyalists, this was a situation bound to produce ambivalence—a certain imperative to reaffirm gratitude of some sort, even if briefly, in the immediate aftermath and emotion of Pinochet's death in December 2006. For hard-core loyalists, his passing could also induce a desire to begin a long-term rehabilitation of the image.

To understand how the politics of memory, voice, and silence redefined the Chilean world—by building new sensibilities about human rights, by sparking reckonings with justice and torture, by creating geographies of memorialization, by shaping public opinion and ritual moments—this book offers vital research and insight. In so doing, it draws to the fore the ultimate irony: memory is essential for the creation of political identity, community, and democracy after times of atrocity, but its effects can also undermine the impulse to create the political hero. Coming to terms with the catastrophic failure of a social justice dream in 1973 does not in the long run reinforce a heroic political conceit. Documenting and coming to terms with the atrocities of a dictatorship bent on policide, and turning violently against unarmed citizens redefined into the demonized enemy: this hard and painful work undermines the cult of the hero-dictator. What is left standing, when the myth of the political hero disintegrates, is the moral hero: the person whose values and *consecuencia*, or record of constancy with professed values notwithstanding the political odds, inspire others. In Chile during the human rights struggles under dictatorship and democratic transition, such people emerged

from many walks of life—from civil society and church society as well as political society.

The memory question that emerged during the life-and-death drama of Chile is an issue existential, and moral, as well as political. Forty years ago, on September 11, a Tuesday morning that changed Chile and the world, Salvador Allende understood this. He needed to plant a moral seed.

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[1] For the text of the Nobel Lecture of García Márquez, and for those of other winners including Neruda, see www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/literature/ (accessed 9 September 2012).

[2] For the intersections of Third World Revolution and Cold War in the making of heroic political projects in the mid-to-late twentieth century, and for dynamics as seen from Latin American grassroots experience and in relation to human rights and solidarity politics, three excellent starting points are Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Gilbert M. Joseph and Daniela Spenser, eds., *In from the Cold: Latin America's New Encounter with the Cold War* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008); and Jessica Stites Mor, ed., *Human Rights and Transnational Solidarity in Cold War Latin America* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, forthcoming 2013).

[3] Although I did not focus on the irony theme as such in my trilogy on the memory question in Chile, the empirical foundation for the events described in this foreword is presented and documented in those books. See Steve J. Stern, *Remembering Pinochet's Chile: On the Eve of London 1998* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004); *Battling for Hearts and Minds: Memory Struggles in Pinochet's Chile, 1973–1988* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006); and *Reckoning with Pinochet: The Memory Question in Democratic Chile, 1989–2006* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010). Specifically, for the concept of policide, see *Remembering Pinochet's Chile,* pp. 31–23, 180–181 n. 27. For Allende and Pinochet quotes in context, see *Battling for Hearts and Minds,* pp. 12 and 51; and for Chilean memory politics in relation to a world-history context, see *Reckoning with Pinochet,* pp. 377–383.