

# Canada supports regime in Chile

by Lynn Stow

Canada is providing direct support to Chile's military regime by means of heavy financial involvement in that country, according to a CBC television report. (Fifth Estate, Feb. 1977) It was stated on the programme that the Canadian government had either already guaranteed loans to Chile or was about to do so. However, it was the private sector, and particularly the Noranda copper mining company, which came in for the most direct criticism in the half hour documentary.

Noranda is among the top twenty Canadian corporations. It has many mines and factories in this country, as well as operations in such countries as Nicaragua, Guinea, Mexico, Ireland and the United States. It also has a small mine in Chile, and is proposing to invest a further 350 million dollars in the extraction of Chilean copper. It competed with several international consortiums for the right to develop the mineral in a desolate area of Northern Chile.

Noranda claims to believe that its tranquility and stability in order to

investment will bring advantages to the Chilean people. The company's geologist remarked that the mine is to be sited in an economically depressed area, and that welcome jobs will be provided to the local populace. He left it to his interviewer to spell out the benefits to Noranda itself: the average wage in Chile today is 50 dollars per month, and strikes are not tolerated.

The Chilean generals who seized power in the bloody coup of Sept 1973 have taken the American Milton Friedman as their economic mentor. Friedman is an avowed enemy of the welfare state, claiming that it is responsible for inflation. He denies any ties to the notorious regime in Chile, but his theories are being put into practice there by a group of his former students.

According to this report, inflation has been brought down to 170% per year since the coup. Meanwhile, one in four Chileans is unemployed and a large proportion of the population is malnourished. Soup kitchens organized by the Catholic church are regarded as subversive, and the

"Tyranny beheads the bards, but by secret subterranean springs their voice returns from the bottom of the well to the surface, and even in the darkness rises to the lips of the people."

—Pablo Neruda



Chilean workers at a joyous May Day celebration during the Allende years.

women working in them refused to be filmed for fear of reprisals. A Chilean described the result of the Friedman experiment in these words: "I can tell you that in Chile there are fewer rich, but never so rich as now. And there are many more poor people who have never been so poor as at this time."

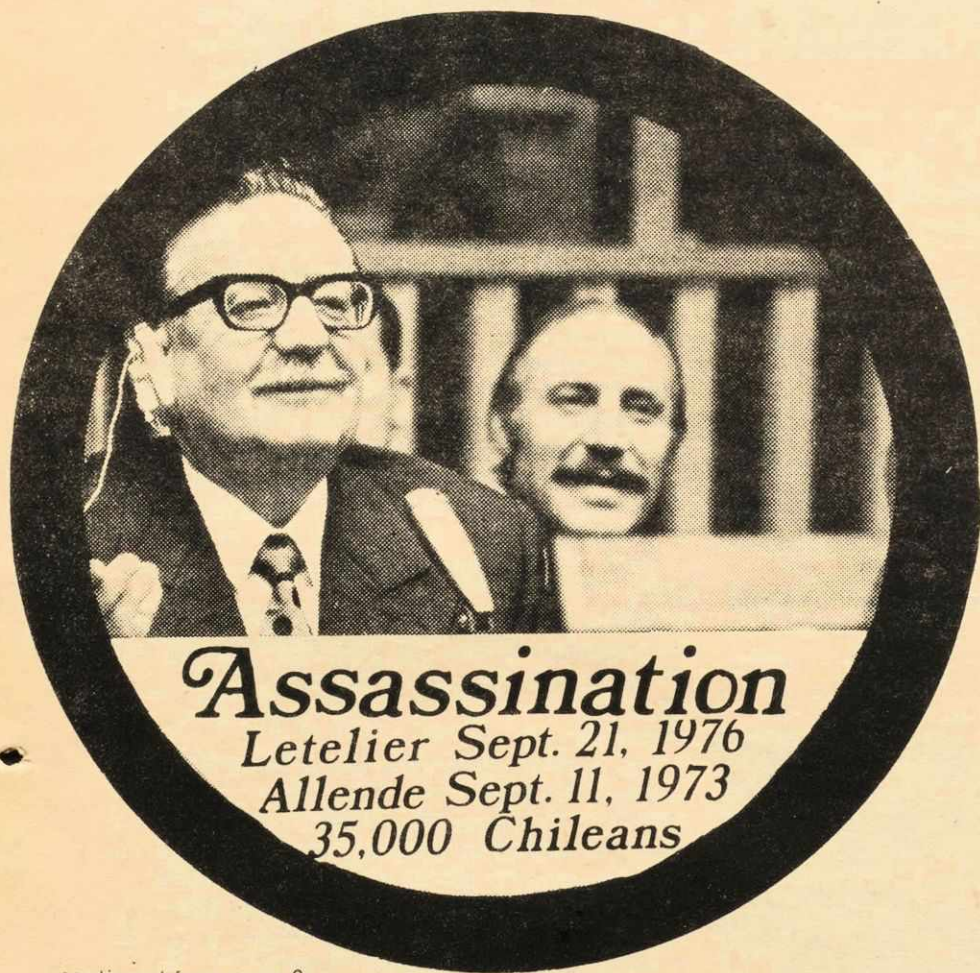
In the current economic climate, even the President of the Chilean Manufacturers' Association, Orlando SAENZ, disagrees with his government's theory of development: "development must involve all the people from the very beginning." Chile is described as a re-created pre-World War I never-never-land for a small group of Chilean businessmen: no unions, no labour troubles, just profit. Money is concentrated in so few hands that there is no competition to bring prices down.

Chile has a foreign debt amounting to 4½ billion dollars. Some international financing institutions have refused to extend the deadline for debt repayment unless the imprisonment and torture of political dissidents cease. The government refuses to meet these conditions and is trying to pay off the debt very

rapidly.

The widow of Orlando Letelier, murdered in Washington last year commented: "repression is a one-way street; once there, you are caught." Letelier fought successfully against a 62½ million dollar investment by a Dutch company earlier in the year.

Debate about investment in Chile continues. The investors argue that Chile is only one of at least sixty countries where torture is alleged to exist and that their investment provides much-needed jobs. Opponents demand an economic embargo as long as torture and repression continue. A Noranda representative, when questioned about the morality of dealing with such a regime, had this to say: "from our point of view, we feel that the actions of the past were justified in terms of having a governmental system which is in the best interests of all the people. Not that some of the actions that were taken to get that point were correct. But this is their country, and they govern their country as they deem fit." In other words, it has nothing to do with us, just as long as we stand to gain from it.



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encourage foreign investment.

One of the things that any American multinational group would emphasize over and over again is the stability of the regime. That's an immeasurable plus to foreign investors. What they don't want to recognize is the cost of this stability—not just the cost of this stability—bodies that are tortured, but also in the millions of people who are hungry and who are staying hungry and who are condemned to perpetual pauperism.

When you have that kind of development model in operation, you have to use repression to keep the thing going, because otherwise it will fall apart.

Unfortunately my friend Alanir Cardoso was tortured for at least a month and a half after I left. He didn't have any American consul to get him out. He is still in prison, and they haven't even tried him.

\*Reprinted from *The Other Side*.

## Chilean junta extends reign of terror

SANTIAGO (CPA/CUP) -- The military dictatorship of Chile has banned all political parties, imposed mail censorship, and press restrictions and extended for another six months the state of seige under which it can hold prisoners

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\$25,000 given to one former IRA man now living in the Irish Republic.

Every person who has received such compensation has been required to sign a pledge not to pursue the matter any further in the courts. Since virtually all the cases that were brought before the European Commission have been dealt with in this manner, none of those accused of carrying out torture has been publicly identified in court.

without charge or court order.

The junta banned "the existence, organization, activities and propaganda of . . . all political parties, entities, groups, factions or movements with a political character." Disobedience can mean fines, imprisonment or exile.

The ban of political parties came after the junta allegedly discovered a plot by leaders of the Christian Democratic Party to overthrow the government. The Christian Democrats were the ruling party in Chile before the election of former president Allende and the bloody military coup that ended democracy there.

AFL-CIO president George Meany, meanwhile, has denounced the fascist dictatorship for "the documented persecution, jailing and torturing of Chilean trade unionists . . . guilty of nothing more

than their firm belief in democracy and freedom."

Meany said in a letter to the Chilean junta that "the excesses committed by your government in the name of anti-communism are typical of the most tyrannical fascist regimes of our century."

### Lost army found

SAN FRANCISCO (ZNS-CUP) -- An army of Persian soldiers who got sidetracked while invading Egypt 2,500 years ago has been found.

Archeologists digging in sands 300 miles west of Cairo report they have uncovered the skeletons of a complete army, including swords and spears. According to the scientist, the troops were probably buried alive by a violent desert sandstorm.

Until the discovery the fate of the missing army, led by King Cambyses the Second, was a mystery.