

Constable, Pamela, and Arturo Valenzuela. *A Nation of Enemies: Chile Under Pinochet*. New York: Norton, 1991.

Beginning with the telling photograph on the jacket and the provocative title, this book successfully draws the reader into a well written story of the agony, contradictions and legacy of seventeen years of dictatorship in the name of freedom. Directed at a general audience, *A Nation of Enemies* seeks to provide “a window into each sector of society” (p. 10), a society divided by sharp ideological, class and party lines and brutalized by “internal war” from 1973 to 1990.

The authors lucidly describe the contending forces in the unequal war, after briefly informing the reader of the circumstances that led to the 1973 coup. The secret police, the special military units dedicated to repression of the regime’s enemies, General Augusto Pinochet and the military junta, the entrepreneurs, the civilian politicians who pushed for the coup and the technocrats who designed the “economic miracle” all receive attention. Their opinions are recorded in hundreds of interviews as are those of the regime’s opponents — those who were arrested, exiled and tortured, psychologists who treated them later, leaders of the opposition parties and labor movements, academics and religious officials.

The book is especially good in addressing the subservience of the judicial system to the military junta and in detailing the “massive ideological purge” of the universities. (p. 249) Discussion of art and literature, life at the office, the change in families and even dinner conversation help the reader understand the meaning of the Pinochet years. Like Chilean playwright Marco Antonio de la Parra whom they quote, Constable and Valenzuela explore “the passive responses of ordinary Chileans, the self-pity of the left, and the banal world of the torturer.” (p. 159)

The book successfully captures much of the dramatic transformation of Chile from 1973 to 1990, the revolution in banking and business, in education and health care, in government offices, shantytowns, and middle class households. The contradictions generated by a dictatorship that wished to reduce the role of government in the economy, to privatize social services, to make Chile a modern, economically efficient nation — and whose dictator-president bragged that not a leaf fell in the country without his knowledge — are conveyed clearly and sometimes poetically. The authors do this themselves and through the eyes, mouths and hearts of their interviewees.

In short, this is a very good book. But there are subtleties and subtexts that conflict with my own perception of Chile’s history and recent past. I believe Constable and Valenzuela overestimate the civility and democratic nature of Chilean society and underestimate the precedents for General Pinochet’s dicta-

torship. (p. 20) Chile's vaunted stability in the nineteenth century rested on long periods of constitutional dictatorship, if not direct military rule. Challenges by workers and *campesinos* to the political class were repeatedly met with violence; the penal code (1875) and military code of justice delineated several types of political crimes, including defaming, slandering or dishonoring government officials and the military. Civilians could be, and were, tried by military tribunals. This did not occur often, but remained a legal instrument of repression of which the *golpistas* availed themselves in 1973.

Pinochet's heroes, Diego Portales, the merchant-politician who helped found stable authoritarian government in the 1830s, and Carlos Ibáñez, the Prussian-trained officer who ruled from 1927 to 1931, cared little for civil liberties and rights and ferociously attacked their opponents. Like Pinochet, Portales and Ibáñez counted on support from civilians for their repression of opponents. Chilean democracy always had an authoritarian underside that surfaced when stability was threatened.

In rural Chile and provincial Chile, which are given much less attention by the authors, government officials, police, and occasionally the military maintained law and order more harshly and with less concern for the "vener of legal formality" that Constable and Valenzuela rightly note was important even to Pinochet and his judges. (p. 127) *Campesinos* and workers were disproportionately represented among the tortured, disappeared, and murdered after 1973. This was no accident. It is in Santiago that the political class forges alliances, makes deals, and defines the terms of conflict for the *Nation of Enemies*. But there is more to Chile than Santiago, and less to Chilean democracy in the provinces and countryside than in the capital.

The book's concluding passages also seem contradictory, but upon reflection, perhaps properly so. As Patricio Aylwin's inauguration (March 1990) approached, "signs of emerging consensus and reconciliation abounded." Yet Chile was "still a society of ghettos, in which the breaches between *rotos* [a Chilean term not entirely translatable as 'urban poor'] and *momios* ['the rich and conservative'] soldiers and civilians, were as wide as ever." (p. 318) Both of these assertions were true, but that Pinochet's "days of real power drew to an end" as he left the presidency, is hard to accept. The radical shift in power and resources he had effected, including his continuance as army commander, the constitutional and legal guarantees for his appointees and the military, and the pervasive fear of "another September 11" (the date of the 1973 coup) that he bequeathed all argue against such an optimistic interpretation.

The image of a Pinochet pelted with tomatoes and eggs after President Aylwin's inauguration and congressman Claudio Huepe singing with gusto (p. 319) is too close to "and they lived happily ever after." Soon after, Pinochet ordered the army to the barracks, implicitly threatening another coup. The human rights report ordered by the government was upstaged by the assassina-

tion of Pinochet supporter and author of the 1980 constitution, Senator Jaime Guzman. Fighting crime and terrorism became the new government's main public concern, preempting its program for democratization, demilitarization of politics, and trials of officers guilty of human rights violations. Fighting crime also overshadowed improvement in the living conditions of the five million poor that appeared in much of the *Concertación's* (the seventeen party coalition opposing Pinochet) electoral propaganda.

Constable and Valenzuela know all this, even as they emphasize the "new appreciation for the values of moderation and compromise that had once been discarded" and that "each political group had made enormous concessions to ensure that the political transition would take place." (p. 319) In these respects they are also correct, but leave the impression that this moderation and compromise was reciprocal, that the political right and the military have become more tolerant also, that should there be rising inflation, a populist push by elements of the left, a breakdown of the Christian Democratic-Socialist coalition, a rejection of the triumphant neo-liberal religion, and renewed social mobilization that new tragedy might not occur. They also leave the impression that sincere accommodation to Pinochet's victory in defeat, what the General repeatedly calls *Misión Cumplida*, rather than fear of renewed repression is the glue holding together the governing coalition.

I hope Constable and Valenzuela are right. I fear otherwise.

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John A. English. *The Canadian Army and the Normandy Campaign: A Study of Failure in High Command*. New York: Praeger, 1991.

History is replete with surprises, not the least of which is the realization that some long-forgotten event can provide insights into the most pressing problems of the day. Viewed in this manner, John English's work offers more than just a novel explanation of the dismal performance of the Canadian army following the opening of the Second Front during World War II. Instead, his work stands as a warning to officers, policy makers and Americans and Canadians alike about the dangers of ignoring the need to prepare for war in times of tranquillity. Without exaggeration, English's work should be required reading for senior officers as they adjust military operations and force structures to accommodate the reduction in public interest and resources that has accompanied the demise of the Soviet empire.