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Introduction: Narrow but endlessly deep

On 11 September 1973, the Chilean Chief of the Armed Forces Augusto Pinochet overthrew the Popular Unity government of Salvador Allende and installed a military dictatorship. He believed he had two justifications that were shared by almost all of his senior officers and many civilians. The first was that under the rule of President Allende the country had become ungovernable. The second was that Allende's Chile might swing even further to the left to become a Cuban-style dictatorship of the proletariat. By 1990, when Pinochet stood down after an unsuccessful referendum to legitimate himself, the danger to conservative Chile had passed. The country was uneasy but stable, and the possibility of a second Cuba remote.

The victory of the right had come at a heavy cost to the small nation. By 1990, beginning what is known in Chile as the Transition to Democracy, Chilean society was severely traumatised. More than 30,000 people had been tortured either to extract information or simply to terrorise them. Issues of truth and justice remained unresolved; more than half the bodies of the 3,000 detained-disappeared remained disappeared. There seemed little prospect of prosecuting even the well-known perpetrators of Pinochet's bidding. The 1980 Constitution, enacted to preserve the significant features of the 'conservative

revolution’,¹ was still largely intact. Pinochet remained head of the armed forces and was created Senator for Life. This book traces the attempts of survivors, their families, descendants and supporters to memorialise the experiences of torture, terror and state murder at seven infamous Sites of Conscience, all within Santiago. For everyone it has been a hard and bitter journey, and one by no means complete.

Why hard and bitter? The first obstacle to memorialisation has been the Chilean state. This may surprise, since all of the governments since 1990 save one have been of the centre-left. A principal reason for their lack of enthusiasm is that, while what some Chileans call the transition to democracy began in 1990, for a time no government could be sure that the military would not again intervene, if provoked. A second reason is that an agenda of national reconciliation did not necessarily include state support for memorialising the persecution of every left-wing political party, particularly those once dedicated to its own overthrow! Hence the Chilean state’s stance has been tentative, supporting a museum here, opposing another there, privileging one memorial, obstructing another, vacillating, unpredictably encouraging or denying. We will follow closely its support, or absence of support, at each of the seven sites, from the beginning of the transition to democracy to the present day.

The second obstacle is the relationship, then and now, between the vast array of leftist opinion and parties. At the time of the coup the spectrum was wide indeed. On the far left stood the highly educated, articulate, idealistic and often well-born members of the MIR, the Movement of the Revolutionary Left. Its members saw themselves as the Che Guevarist vanguard that would lead the masses to a communist utopia – without the need for elections. They never joined Allende’s coalition. Next came Allende’s own party, the Socialists, favouring force where necessary to achieve a democratic state: it was they who formed the most stable element in Allende’s fluid government. More moderate again were the less doctrinaire Communists and the MAPU (Popular Unitary Action Movement),

1 For example, Art. 43 of the 1980 Constitution held that ‘by the declaration of a state of emergency, the President of the Republic is enabled to suspend or restrict personal liberty, the right of assembly and the freedom to work. He can, also, restrict the exercise of the right of association, intercept, open, or record documents and all classes of communications, order requisition of assets and establish limitations on the exercise of the right of ownership’; ‘Chile’s Constitution of 1980 with Amendments through 2012’.

ready to work when necessary with other groups towards a pragmatic program of wages and conditions. They formed the second stable element of Allende's government. Towards the political centre, moderates like the Christian Democrats filled out the conservative end of left-wing opinion, and served for a time with Allende. Such were the political parties whose conflicting diversity was to unsettle Allende and, 30 years later, was to divide those bent on establishing memorials at the sites at which they or their comrades had suffered so hideously. The role of the Chilean state and the political factions, then, are the two elements that we will follow most closely in the bitter and painful struggles that are to follow. Of the 45,000 people arrested during the initial three-month reign of terror and of the more than 1,000 people killed, the majority were trade unionists and/or former members of the radical leftist parties, particularly those advocating armed revolution against the right.

In the analysis of each site we follow a chronological journey that is also a physical one: it is possible that a single person might have been held consecutively in five of these torture and extermination sites where the struggle for memorialisation has been so intense and bitter. But we will never know, and neither would that detainee – he or she was moved generally at night and always blindfolded. Only after the transition to democracy in 1990 did it become a little clearer who had been moved, where to, and why. Much even now remains unknown, especially the identities of the some of the perpetrators, though obviously the unreleased state archives and former military and security personnel together could reveal almost everything.

Yet there remains the issue: would releasing the documents aid or hinder the process of national reconciliation?

The psychologist Elizabeth Lira and the political scientist Brian Loveman examined a number of formal and informal strategies, known as the *Vía Chilena de Reconciliación Política*, developed in Chile over two centuries to restabilise the nation after a period of state violence, a set of procedures for reconciliation after political cataclysm. The measures were partly constitutional, partly informal, but each was designed to help the government and nation function again with the approval of a majority of its citizens. Such measures have included commutation of prison sentences for crimes committed by police and military, the return of exiles sometimes with restitution

of property or pension, one-off payments to sufferers on both sides of the recent conflict, special laws for named individuals for purposes of reparation, and symbolic measures like public memorials. They also looked to the creation of new political coalitions involving some of the losers in the conflict; redefinition of key actors, parties and worker organisations to carry on under new names; reincorporation of some of the politically defeated into cabinet, universities or bureaucracy; and constitutional and legal reforms to ratify the re-establishment of the 'Chilean family'. Though few Chileans surviving a coup d'état or revolution believed that political forgetting was possible, Chileans held it to be necessary periodically to 'start again'. Such attempted reconciliation did not necessarily signify forgiveness, more that certain violent measures taken by the state in a period of crisis were not later to be openly discussed. Measures of reconciliation demanded that officials of a new political regime avert their gaze from certain events; citizens who refused to do so were held to be in bad taste, or worse. Lira and Loveman argue that such measures have been to a point enacted even by post-Pinochet centre-left governments.²

No post-Pinochet government has as yet been prepared to release the secret information that would identify lists of perpetrators, arguably because it is consistent with the *Via Chilena*. That is to say, each government since 1990 has calculated that the *majority* of Chileans agree that the mass prosecution of malefactors by the state itself, whatever the moral imperative, was undesirable in the interests of national workability. Even President Bachelet, her father dead after torture, her mother and she herself tortured and exiled, has presumably thought better of pursuing the morally justified path. All the national leaders, in fact, have steered a careful course. The first elected president after the dictatorship, Patricio Aylwin, made it clear that his government would take no part in prosecuting the perpetrators: that was a matter for the courts.³ He declared that his presidency signified not the 'return' to democracy but the 'transition' towards

2 Elizabeth Lira and Brian Loveman, 'Truth, Justice reconciliation and impunity as historical themes: Chile 1814–2006', *Radical History Review*, no. 97, 2007, 42–76; see also Peter Read, 'Reconciliation without history: State crime and state punishment in Chile and Australia', in Frances Peters-Little, Ann Curthoys, John Docker, eds, *Passionate Histories*, Aboriginal History Monograph 21, ANU E Press, Canberra, 2010, pp. 281–82.

3 Chile has jailed more perpetrators of violence committed in the name of the state than any other nation in South America; but it is the victims who have proceeded against them, not the state itself.

it, conceding even-handedly that if Allende carried no mandate to convert Chile into a Socialist state, then the intervention of Pinochet had divided the country still further. But it was not only the political right, he asserted, whom Allende had alienated.⁴ The inference that some of the left had become disillusioned with Allende, or might even carry some of the blame for the coup, was left hanging. It needed the centre-right President Sebastián Piñera (2010–13) to shift the blame further to the left in carefully suggesting that, in his opinion, the first to bear responsibility should be those who promoted hatred and armed violence and who despised democracy as the simple tool of the bourgeoisie, while themselves attracting no more than a third of the popular vote.⁵

A national reconciliation by which left and right embrace rather than tolerate each other is clearly impossible while the protagonists of those decades remain alive. Yet it is possible to achieve it in later generations if the evidence is preserved to make it possible. At Myall Creek, Australia, in 1838, white men massacred 28 Aborigines. Unusually, the government took the crime seriously, gathered evidence, conducted a trial and executed seven of the perpetrators. In June 2000, descendants of the perpetrators and descendants of the victims gathered at the site for the unveiling of a monument. Side by side, some even holding hands, they walked through the sacred smoke towards a giant boulder whose signage included the words:

Erected on 10 June 2000 by a group of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians in an act of reconciliation and in acknowledgement of the truth of our shared history.

The extraordinary ceremony, so rare in Australia, was only possible because the police had minutely gathered evidence from witnesses, survivors and perpetrators – 142 years earlier. Such a symbolic

4 Azócar Patricio Aylwin, 'El desafío de mirar al futuro' [The challenge to foresee the future], in Hernán Larraín and Richard Nuñez, eds, *Las Voces de la Reconciliation*, Instituto de la Sociedad, Santiago, 2013, pp. 35–36.

5 Sebastián E. Piñera, 'Por un Chile reconciliado y en paz' [For a reconciled and peaceful Chile], in Larraín and Nuñez, *Las Voces de la Reconciliation*, pp. 27–29. Probably Piñera referred to the more radical Socialists and the MIRistas, even though the latter had been banned as a political organisation since 1969.

reconciliation may in time be possible in Chile too; provided that the unreleased evidence and oral history programs still under way are preserved for the great-grandchildren of the future.⁶

Many times in the following chapters we will find evidence of successive governments stopping short of releasing documents, but still following a moderate *Via Chilena* to assuage the left while not antagonising the right. We will follow a (failed) attempt, unaccompanied by prosecutions, to identify the bodies uncovered in the General Cemetery. At a Site of Conscience in José Domingo Cañas we investigate the establishment of an (underfunded) museum to placate a prominent leftist critic. We will see how the state paid for a Wall of Names of victims at the best known of all such centres, Villa Grimaldi, and how it commissioned a team of architects and urban planners to memorialise the National Stadium. All governments have tolerated community-based denunciations of identified perpetrators by the ceremony known as the '*funa*'; we follow a particularly spectacular example of the *funa* that denounced 'el Príncipe' (the Prince), the military officer most closely associated with the murder of the Chilean musician Victor Jara. We test Aylwin's assertion that it was not only the conservatives who were alienated by Allende, by following the clash of two working-class ideologies over if and where to site a memorial to urban guerillas. At the better-known Site of Conscience Londres 38, we will note the reluctance of any administration to allow a state-owned building to be a platform of the MIR, which party, in Piñera's opinion, once portrayed democracy as the simple tool of the bourgeoisie. Perhaps each of these measures, sponsored by one or other of all post-Pinochet governments, are the clearest expression of a contemporary *Via Chilena* and a perceived desire to 'start again'.

The same might be said about the Museum for Memory and Human Rights, initiated and opened by Bachelet in 2010 in the last few months of her first term. The name itself suggested the tensions among the members of the planning committee. Memory is not the same as Memories, and neither, as we shall see, is necessarily to be equated with human rights. The same tensions are evident on every

6 Further discussion, see Peter Read, 'The truth that will set us all free: An uncertain history of memorials to Indigenous Australians', in Louise Purbrick, Jim Aulick and Graham Dawson, eds, *Contested Spaces: Sites, Representations and Histories of Conflict*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, 2007, pp. 150–52.

floor of the exhibition. Victor Jara's song, written as a detainee in the last days of his life and displayed movingly over 10 metres of the entry passageway, sits a little awkwardly beside a rather less prominent catalogue of atrocities committed in Rwanda, Thailand and a dozen other countries. Clearly this museum will focus not on international but Chilean memory and human rights. Upstairs, noisily jostling schoolchildren watching footage of running troops may find themselves close to a woman shaking in grief as she listens to an audio recording.

Whose human rights? The display begins on 11 September 1973, without information on what might have precipitated the coup. Online comments on the display often criticise the emphasis on violations of human rights rather than explaining the cause of the military intervention. The same concerns are manifest in many academic conferences. In 2013, the historian Andrés Estefane concluded a discussion of the implication of the displays with the acerbic observation:

Pain, suffering, disorientation, mutilation, solitude, disappearance, torture, murder, darkness, all these tropes are here introduced as the result of the 'unnatural' coincidence between violence and politics. Thus, there is no reflection on the political function of violence. There is pure violence represented in a fashion that directly appeals to the fragility of the body. Furthermore, by emphasizing the atrocities perpetrated in the past by a state that magically does not resemble and has no relationship with the actual state, by promoting an ideological and practical distance between the material and symbolic benefits of today and the brutality and precariousness of a dark past, by suggesting that outside the liberal state the individual citizen becomes vulnerable, Latin American governments are now recycling and subverting a classic socialist maxim: the precept of these times seems to be *liberal democracy or barbarism*.⁷

The origins of the museum's lack of historical analysis can perhaps be found in Bachelet's inaugural address in March 2006 – that violations of human rights can have many explanations but absolutely no

7 Andrés Estefane, 'Materiality and politics in Chile's Museum of Memory and Human Rights', *Thresholds* 41, Spring 2013, p. 169.

justification.⁸ Here, surely, is the left's version of Aylwin's dictum that if Allende carried no mandate to convert Chile into a Socialist state, then the intervention of Pinochet had divided the country still further. The Via Chilena, like the museum itself, suggests that any historical display sponsored by the state should take care not to revive antagonisms that might hinder the nation 'moving on'.

The narrative of each study is carried by a single individual closely connected with it, as detainee, caretaker, curator or witness. It begins on the first day of the coup at the State University of Technology (UTE) where Victor Jara and hundreds of students and staff were trapped. From the UTE the detainees were marched to the Stadium of Chile, now known as the Victor Jara Stadium, to join thousands of others to be interrogated, tortured or killed. We follow Jara's life and death as it is remembered – or not remembered – at the university and the stadium that now bears his name. The university's confused signage today indicates the paralysing terror and uncertainty of the first few days of the coup. At the stadium, successive Ministers for Sport, by refusing funding and discouraging interest, have actively obstructed any kind of memorialisation.

Nena González leads the third chapter as we follow the bodies of those murdered at the Stadium of Chile and elsewhere, to an obscure precinct of the Santiago General Cemetery, Patio 29. The state security began to secretly and unceremoniously bury its victims shortly after the coup. The post-Pinochet state found a role for itself here too, in exhuming and identifying hundreds of victims; but in its haste to pacify the families and to deflect demands to identify and punish the perpetrators, it relied too heavily on the then crude science of DNA profiling. Most of the human remains were misidentified. Immediately after the coup, and from an unobtrusive corner as she worked, Nena saw the trucks carrying hundreds of naked bodies to be thrown into holes and, nine years later, Pinochet's hurried exhumations to conceal the makeshift burials; she spoke to officers who despised her and an endless array of terrified families asking what she knew. She carries the trauma to this day.

8 Cited, Peter Kornbluh and Katherine Hite, 'Chile's turning point', *The Nation*, 17 February 2010.

Those who survived the first days of executions at sites like the Stadium of Chile were trucked within days to another, and much bigger holding area, the National Stadium. Our focus is on an accidental victim. Don Roberto Muñoz first was a worker at the stadium, then arrested, detained, tortured, released, and today is a worker at the site again. We follow the painful tensions between the state and memorialisers, heritage design professionals and those who experienced the terror, and between the survivors themselves as to what form the monuments should take.

The fourth chapter follows the journey of at least 42 detainees taken from the National Stadium to the 'House of Memory' at 1367 José Domingo Cañas (Street). Here we confront a formidable personality, Laura Moya Diaz, who almost single-handedly created the display. Her passing in 2013 signified a new direction to the memorial and museum that she had created and dominated for so long.

From José Domingo Cañas certain detainees were trucked to a larger and more specialised site of torture in the middle of the CBD, at 38 Londres (Street). In 2008, undecided as to the building's future, the state at first allowed a variety of left-wing interpretations of the recent past. By 2010 it had begun to grasp the potential of the site for the presentation of its own less confrontational interpretation of the Pinochet era right in the centre of the city, and installed itself as the principal voice of the building's remembrance. Such is the multiplicity of contending voices that no single personality can carry the narrative, but we follow in particular Roberto D'Orival Briceño, the brother of a detained-disappeared, whose collective pressed the government to install the MIRistas as inheritors of the building.

Should a site of terror evoke feelings of horror or serenity? At the best known of all the Chilean memorial parks, Parque por la Paz Villa Grimaldi (known colloquially as Villa Grimaldi), prolonged debate at length produced a park of peace in which the horrors of torture and disappearance were presented much less graphically than some of its corporation members demanded. Michele Drouilly, sister of the detained-disappeared Jacqueline, guides us through the intense debates over the priorities of detained-disappeared or survivor.

Lastly, we examine a site on which a spotlight fell in the last years of the dictatorship. Here in 2009 was unveiled a memorial stone dedicated principally to four urban guerillas of the armed revolutionary cell known as *Rodriguistas*. Josefina Rodriguez, founding member of a local chapter to construct new housing for Chile's needy, opposed the memorialisation from the beginning. Today that memorial stone is nowhere to be seen.

Haifa Zangana was imprisoned and tortured in the infamous prisons Qasr al-Nihaya and Abu Ghraib, near Baghdad, in 1971. She asks:

What would you do with such sites of torture? What should happen to a building where thousands of civilians, including women and teenagers, many of whom have been picked up in random military sweeps and at highway checkpoints, have experienced or witnessed degrading and dehumanizing practices? A place where, in some cases, torture resulted in death? Where photographs and videos, kept as memorabilia, show breaking chemical lights and pouring the phosphoric liquid on detainees; pouring cold water on naked detainees, beating detainees with a broom handle and a chair; threatening male detainees with rape ... sodomizing a detainee with a chemical light and perhaps a broomstick ...⁹

President George W. Bush, after revelations of US atrocities enacted on prisoners in 2003, wanted Abu Ghraib demolished. Yet most prisoners, artists and human rights advocates, including Zangana, wanted it saved, conserved and a part set aside as a museum as a reminder of the 'scar that runs deep within our collective memory ... No screams of the abused, no howling of the tortured, no whispers of women begging for mercy. Silence will be the language that howls out to condemn atrocities, violence, humiliation and degradation and protests our pain.'¹⁰ Such a memorial might seem unobjectionable, but we shall see how creating a desolate silence in a former place of agony can be anathema to other survivors of identical experience.

9 Haifa Zangana, 'Foreword: Abu Ghraib: Prison as a Collective Memory', in Purbrick, Aulick and Dawson, *Contested Spaces*, p. xiv.

10 *Ibid.*, pp. xiv–xv.

Groups representing victims of the German Democratic Republic rejected the first designs of a memorial to the Berlin Wall because they believed it belittled its real horror.¹¹

This is a book not of parties or ideologies but public history. It focuses on the memorials and memorialisers at each of the seven sites, engaging with worldwide debates about why and how should deeds of state violence to its own citizens be remembered, and by whom. Visits to such sites of violence have produced hundreds of reflections in academic journals or periodicals. Many are superficial, and how could they not be after an author's single visit? Our book traces the long period of memorialisation, from design proposals, commission, construction and unveiling; in whose name were they created, who remained disappointed? Who wrote the signage, whose words were excluded? How did rival groups change their positions over a decade or more? What moral, poetic, historical, political or ideological positions do the memorials present?

Some 250 memorials to the victims of the Pinochet repression, the majority only plaques, exist throughout Santiago. Many of these can be seen to parallel, or even substitute for, the prosecution and punishment of the perpetrators for crimes of disappearance, torture and detention, even of forced exile.¹² They can speak, through memory, of victimhood, heroism and martyrdom. They can demand recognition, reparation, reconciliation or justice. Memorials are one way – and the least likely to be condemned by apologists for the violence – for a state to appear to take responsibility for its past. But memorials to state violence are also, in the words of the politics of memory scholar Katherine Hite, 'battlegrounds, as artists, designers, states and societies negotiate how to convey, or evoke, or even shock, passers-by into contemplation and reaction'.¹³ Hite distinguishes 'human rights' commemoration, sponsored by survivors and their advocates, from 'political' commemoration, led by states often in an attempt to heal

11 Gerd Knischewski and Ulla Spittler, 'Competing pasts: A comparison of National Socialist and German Democratic Remembrance in two Berlin memorial sites', in Purbrick, Aulich and Dawson, *Contested Spaces*, p. 175.

12 'Exiles File Civil Suits', *Memoria y Justicia – Human Rights Today – Exiles*.

13 Katherine Hite, 'Chile's National Stadium: As monument, as memorial', *ReVista*, Spring 2004, p. 61.

societal fractures.¹⁴ Typically, 'human rights'-driven memorials list the names of victims. The decision to erect a memorial, decide upon its form and content, secure funding and arrange a particular location will almost always be lengthy and divisive. The various protagonists – survivors, families of the disappeared and politically executed, and human rights activists – will not by any means share the same preferences or intentions. The memorial may register the emotions of loss and pain, but also of anger, or horror, or serenity and peace. There may be artefacts collected and displayed. Dedicated unpaid officials will need to care for the memorial, and as they age, or funds diminish, the memorial may show signs of neglect, even vandalism.

By contrast, state memorials are less likely to name victims; often they will be grand, impersonal, perhaps majestic. Debate as to the memorial's final form will remain internal. Very rarely will the public be granted a right of consultation. None of the features of design or wording, so important to human rights activists, will be open for debate for the state will follow its own priorities. There will be only one 'memory', one inscription, and that is the state's. At least one feature, however, will be common to the state and non-state memorial: the names of the perpetrators will not be listed.¹⁵

The struggles of Chilean memorialisers have many international parallels. The government's 'oblivion by passive hostility' of the Victor Jara Stadium is a milder version of the fate of the 'Gulag Museum', Perm-36, in Russia, whose private sponsors in 1996 created it in their euphoria at the Soviet collapse. But regional governments first showed little interest, later hostility towards its development. Bureaucratic passive resistance reduced, then cut, the museum's funding, and 2014 saw its closure.¹⁶ Nor was the forensic scientists' catastrophic misidentification of bodies exhumed from Patio 29 unknown elsewhere. In 2014 the South Korean government, in haste to satisfy the demands of distraught relatives, also misidentified many of the

14 Katherine Hite and Cath Collins, 'Memorial fragments, monumental silences and reawakenings in 21st century Chile', *Millenium* 38(2), 2009, p. 380.

15 The trend towards avoidance was set in the 'Rettig Report' and the 'Valech Report', the two major state-sponsored investigations into the Pinochet Regime. Both named victims, but neither identified perpetrators (the 'Report of the National Commission for Truth and Reconciliation', 1991, and the 'Report of the National Commission on Political Imprisonment and Torture', 2004).

16 'Perm-36', Wikipedia; 'Russian activists rally round embattled museum of Soviet repression', Radio Free Europe, 2 October 2014.

bodies recovered from a sunken ferry and returned them to the wrong families.¹⁷ At the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington DC, as at the Chilean National Stadium, opinions divided sharply not only between the professional design team and the veterans as to the form of the Washington Memorial, but just as sharply between the veterans themselves.¹⁸ The dangers in a project leader failing to persuade the community-of-interest to follow, which we will see at José Domingo Cañas, had a more extreme counterpart at the Smithsonian Museum in Washington DC. It followed a decision of Martin Harwitt, director of the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum, to display 'Enola Gay', the plane that dropped the atomic bomb, without sufficient discussion of the context. Harwitt was forced to resign.¹⁹ Many governments, as at Londres 38, use historic sites for their own interpretative purposes. In the interest of fostering national unity, the Singaporean government saw the advantage in stressing the role of Singaporean Malay soldiers in the World War Two Changi prison camp museum, and in the 1990s rewrote the signage to support this wider purpose.²⁰ The opposing polarities of horror or the serenity of contemplation to be invoked at a historic site are, first, at Auschwitz-Birkenau, which exhibits the crematoria, piles of clothing, shoes and human hair, and conversely at the Park of Peace at Hiroshima, intended 'not only to memorialize the victims, but also to establish the memory of nuclear horrors [by preserving the Genbaku Dome] and advocate world peace'.²¹

Memorials can invoke the strongest emotions. The destruction of one that we will meet in Quinta Normal, Santiago, is echoed in Germany, where it is universally considered too dangerous to name perpetrators on World War Two memorials for fear of reprisals to the memorial, or to the designers!²² In central Queensland, Australia, a memorial to the qualities of Kalkadoon Aboriginal warriors in fighting white invaders has been defaced or blown up several times.²³ At Knin Castle near

17 'South Korea admits ferry disaster dead bodies given to wrong families', *The Guardian*, 25 April 2014.

18 Denise Kirsten Wills, 'The Vietnam Memorial's history', *Washingtonian*, 1 November 2007.

19 Debbie Ann Doyle, 'Historians protest the new Enola Gay exhibit', *Perspectives of History*, December 2003.

20 Peter Read, 'Where are you Uncle John?' *Australian Cultural History* 27(9), 2009, 13–24.

21 Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum website; 'Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park', Wikipedia.

22 Klaus Neumann, *Shifting Memories: The Nazi Past in the New Germany*, University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, 2000.

23 Lisanne Gibson, and Joanna Besley, *Monumental Queensland: Signposts on a Cultural Landscape*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 2005, pp. 51–54.

Split, Croatia, just the top half of a memorial plaque dedicated to a Croatian patriot killed by Italian soldiers in the World War Two was preserved in the civil war (1991–95), but the bottom half – attesting to the plaque’s erection by Serbo-Croatians – has been smashed. In Warsaw, patriots chose a random, neutral space in a cemetery to mourn their compatriots killed in Katyn Forest for fear that anything more tangible would be destroyed and the mourners punished.²⁴ Those who live through times of state violence, even those who participated in it, are likely to cast themselves as victims rather than victimisers. Descendants of perpetrators may deny responsibility for the actions of their forbears. Memorials protesting against state violence thus are ever in danger of defacement.

The sites that we will investigate are among the most iconic of more than 1,000 sites of torture and extermination throughout the country. Their multiple interpretations vary from oblivion to detailed and passionate expositions. The centre ‘Simon Bolivar’, a site chosen for the interrogation and execution of Communist Party leaders, was a complex of buildings completely unknown to investigators until a former guard confessed in 2007 to having worked there.²⁵ Terrible details emerged of fingerprints burnt off corpses with a blowtorch to prevent identification, of murders with Sarin gas or asphyxiation by plastic bag, of at least one communist being dropped into the sea by helicopter. Yet today the site is again a private house offering no acknowledgement to visitors, while the street numbering has been altered to confuse the ignorant. Only a crude, recently painted inscription on the fence indicates the true location of ‘Simon Bolivar’. In 2013 a plaque marked the site. Next day it was gone and it has not been replaced. Oblivion.

A prototype of memorial-as-passionate-ideology is ‘The House Museum of Human Rights Alberto Bachelet Martinez’, known to the security forces as ‘Nido #20’, in the middle-class Santiago suburb of La Cisterna. Here a single dedicated individual, Juan Espina Espina, ex-militant and torture victim, maintains the small private house as a museum. Probably the dwelling was never much more than a

24 Lynn Olson and Stanley Cloud, *A Question of Honor: The Kościuszko Squadron: Forgotten Heroes of World War II*, Vintage Books, New York, 2007, p. 412.

25 Jorge Escalante and Javier Rebolledo, ‘The “Dolphins” that exterminated the Communist Party’, *La Nación*, 1 April 2007.

holding centre, but four people are known to have been tortured to death within its walls. Owned by the state since 2006, the house stands near the home where Bachelet, Chile's current president, grew up. Her father, General Alberto Bachelet, died after arrest and torture in the Air Force War Academy.²⁶ Precise information about Nido #20, as about nearly all such Chilean centres, is scarce. In reconstructing its history, little information could be gained from neighbours, for the guards, on the arrival of each detainee, would fire their guns in the air to scare everyone inside. In the bathroom is displayed an imitation *parrilla* (grill) on which detainees were tortured by electricity; in a bedroom, a tiny cupboard containing a life-sized two dimensional bound and gagged detainee almost bent double, is jammed into this tiny space. None of those known to have died here, however, are named. Rather, the overall message of the museum is less personal than unashamedly political. A sign in the entrance room reads:

The opposition to the Popular Unity Party and to the movement began the political struggle that sought to declare government measures unconstitutional, and saturate the media with alarming information. Also, social and economic destabilisation by creating food shortages, strikes by employees and college professionals, commercial and transport stoppages that built upon the climate of commotion.

Finally, the use of violence, assassination and sabotage to promote the coup against the state:

The US government opposed Salvador Allende and promoted the destabilization, violence and the military uprising.

The stress on the role of the United States, the wrongful loss of legitimate government and state-sanctioned murder of its own citizens, contrasts with the public presentations at the larger centres and indicates that split in historical interpretation noted by Hite. At the more notorious sites, we shall see that the dominant interpretation will be the violation of universal human rights, rather than evoking sympathy for the Chilean political left: the polarities of the Cold War are less fashionable today and draw fewer visitors. Juan Espina Espina

²⁶ 'Alberto Bachelet', Wikipedia.

himself concedes that by far the greatest number of visitors to his museum in 2013 came not for the 11 September anniversary of the coup, but to see an exhibition on Anne Frank.²⁷

Yet even in these smaller centres, the tensions we will encounter throughout this study are never absent: between the universal and the particular, the survivor and the detained-disappeared, the state and the family of the victim, and not least, the abysses between the Rodriguista Patriotic Front, the MIR, Socialist, MAPU, Communist and Christian Democrat parties. Each suffered under the dictatorship, and each still seeks particular recognition of its sacrifice. It is between and within this aggressive diversity that the heritage professional must negotiate a path.

Sources on the dictatorship and its aftermath are surprisingly plentiful. Two vital bases of information are the two government reports, the so-called Rettig Report on the politically executed and detained-disappeared, and the Valech Report, on the victims of torture.²⁸ A multitude of autobiographies of dictatorship experience and analyses published by LOM Ediciones/Colección Septiembre supplement the substantial academic discussion, including the major trauma sites. It is hard to keep up with the constant web postings of supporters of leftist political parties, or interest groups associated with each site that we discuss. How, then, in a country saturated in memory can non-Chilean historians contribute something different?

In 2008 we published the article 'Putting site back into trauma studies: A study of five detention and torture centres in Santiago Chile'.²⁹ Here we argued that much recent scholarship had lost sight of that close connection between a generalised societal trauma and the actual sites where the trauma was inflicted. Within the field of public history, scholars of state terrorism and victims of Pinochet themselves

27 Juan Espina Espina, guided tour and interview, 9 November 2013.

28 Memoria Viva is the 'Digital archive of the Violations of Human Rights committed under the Military Dictatorship in Chile, 1973–1990', containing separate sections under criminals, the disappeared, executed and tortured (www.memoriaviva.com/); Archivo Chile (www.archivochile.com/) claims to be the 'Documentation of the political, social, and contemporary popular movements of Chile and Latin America'. While both sources should be used cautiously, much of their information is drawn from the two major government reports into the Pinochet dictatorship, see footnote 15, this chapter.

29 Peter Read and Marivic Wyndham, 'Putting site back into trauma studies: A study of five detention and torture centres in Santiago, Chile', *Life Writing* 5(1), 2008, 79–96.

insist that the loss of a site means a loss of a precise memory that is very often of benefit to the state that committed acts of terrorism. Hernán Valdéz wrote:

If we, conscious of the terror which was established in the country, pass through here without suspecting the existence of this place, what remains for those who want, deliberately, to deny the terror over the others?³⁰

We believe that the status of overseas historian, that is, unassociated with a particular interest group that any Chilean is likely to be, has given us considerable freedom. Outsiders can sometimes move more easily in a number of competing circles of class and party, win some trust and, in part, peer through the fabric of secrecy and mistrust that still exists so strongly within Chilean society. Partisans who have long exhausted their local audiences have a fresh opportunity to express their strongest passions to foreign academics, less biased in either direction. Our biggest contribution, though, may be longevity. Our researches are based on minute examination of specific sites through observation, a continuous photographic record, oral history, curatorial discussions and site visits over a decade and more to track the ascendancy of groups or individuals, changing signage, new memorial constructions or the removal of what was previously displayed. More generally we can track the incipient intrusion of the state into the process of memorialisation that will inevitably elude the casual visitor.

We may ask also: why, at this point, write a longitudinal study of memorialisation? Our answer is that, while moral outrage and street demonstrations will endure for many years, the journey towards physical memorialisation has almost run its course. People understand that the impulse to build new memorials to the victims of the dictatorship is not the force it was. Younger activists recall their own years of fighting for the return of democracy in the 1980s rather than the first murderous years of the coup. What the survivors of the first years of the dictatorship are currently inscribing on their own memorials may be their last chance to write their own history. Their demands for justice and for information still controlled by the state will continue, but it is improbable that following generations will

30 Hernán Valdéz, *Tejas Verdes*, LOM Ediciones, Santiago, 1996, p. 56.

engage with the Pinochet era with quite the same passionate intensity of those who endured the suffering. Never will they be able to claim 'I was here'.

Our intention in this book is not to dwell on the politics of the coup itself: it is as legitimate to celebrate the heroism of Allende's last radio address from his besieged office in the presidential palace, La Moneda, as it is to cite figures of the plunging economy and strike-ridden chaos of his regime. But in order to contextualise why the passions of the early 1970s continue to haunt the memorialisation of sites of state violence, we outline here some key events under Allende's rule up to September 1973. They grant a glimpse of the depth of feeling of the early 1970s, its idealism and hope, courage and frustration, hatred, excitement, resentment, sadness, fear, division and disillusion.

Truly the conservatives had much to resent and fear; truly the left could neither forget nor forgive what was visited upon them from 11 September 1973.

By January 1972, Allende's Popular Unity Party government was failing. The first Marxist ever to become president of a Latin American country through open elections, his was an uneasy coalition of political allies from the moderate to the radical left. But after only a year in power, its divisions, always potential, were rapidly widening. Already he had nationalised the copper and textile industries and confiscated the largest estates; but reluctant to be seen to be dominated by Cuba or dictated to by the United States, Allende was steering a much more erratic course than he would have preferred. In January, one of his volatile and unpredictable political allies, the armed revolutionary political party MIR, was demanding more radical change. In February a more certain ally, the Socialists, was insisting that he spend less of his energies appeasing the MIR and more on dialogue with the Christian Democrats – who were not members of the Popular Unity Party at all. In May his generals warned him that galloping inflation and flagging productivity would weaken the defence forces. In July the National Congress, ever unsympathetic to the Popular Unity Party, tried to impeach the Interior Minister for authorising the importation of small

arms from Cuba. In August 1972 the association of small businesses declared a national strike. Allende responded with a declaration of a State of Emergency. In October the truck drivers struck also; in an attempt to restore calm and guard against the much discussed possibility of a military coup, the president appointed several senior Defence Force officers to his Cabinet. By November the rate of expropriations of large land holdings and businesses in the name of the people had slowed, but another State of Emergency was declared. January 1973 brought the rationing of 30 basic items. In March the military officers withdrew from the Cabinet. In April the United States, pursuing a policy of economic sanctions against Chile for failure to compensate for nationalisation of US-dominated industries, broke off negotiations to refinance the ballooning national debt. In May the copper workers, whose relief from foreign exploitation had been such a key point of the Allende promise, called yet another national strike. June 1973 brought street fighting as leftist groups battled the police and right-wing gangs.³¹ Late that month a coup attempt failed. Known as ‘El Tanquetazo’ because the rebel Army officers used tanks, it was successfully quashed by loyal Constitutionalist soldiers led by Army Commander-in-Chief Carlos Prats. In early September, just before the coup, and amidst much dissatisfaction, and with parts of the country in economic paralysis, Allende devalued the currency by 40 per cent.³² Again and again Chile’s Nobel prize winner Pablo Neruda warned of re-enacting the hideous Spanish Civil War that he had witnessed at first hand. But when it came, Chile’s civil war was much more one-sided than anyone imagined.³³

So deep had become the animosity not only between the government and its opponents but between the government and many of its so-called supporters, that Allende planned a national plebiscite. A popular vote, he hoped, would re-endorse majority support for his Popular Unity Party. The scheduled venue to announce the plebiscite

31 The most significant of the para-military right-wing groups was ‘Patria y Libertad’ (Fatherland and Liberty), disbanded the day after the coup; en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fatherland_and_Liberty.

32 Drawn from various sources including Hutchison, Elizabeth Quay, Thomas Miller Klubock, Nara B. Milanich and Peter Winn, eds, *The Chile Reader*, Duke, Durham and London, 2014, ch. 4, pp. 343–432; Helen Osieja, *Economic Sanctions as an Instrument of US Foreign Policy: The Case of the US Embargo against Cuba*, Universal Publishers, 2006, pp. 97–100; ‘Las raíces de desabastecimiento y el “mercado negro”’ [The roots of scarcity and the black market], 7 February 2002.

33 For example, Mario Amorós, *Neruda: El Príncipe de los Poetas*, Ediciones B, Santiago, 2015, p. 496.

was the most radical of Santiago's universities, the State University of Technology (the UTE), which during Allende's term had become first choice for engineering and technical training for young people of the rural poor. To its friends, the UTE was known as the launching pad of the new professionals. To its critics, it was said to be the Chilean equivalent of the Paris Polytechnic.

The scheduled date of Allende's plebiscite was 11 September 1973.

In this long, narrow country, the passions of remembrance, justice and punishment run endlessly deep: they could scarcely be deeper.

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