

Leninist structure and views of the MIR's national leadership, makes it a little difficult to understand whether there was something especially democratic in the revolutionary project of the movement. The MIR's foes, who constituted a majority in Chile and were distributed across the entire spectrum of institutional politics, certainly did not see it that way.

The question about the meanings of democracy goes to the core of the conflicts that engulfed Chilean politics in the years of the Allende administration, and the MIR was a disproportionately important actor in these conflicts. Consequently, a more schematic discussion of the interplay between concepts such as 'revolution' and 'participatory or radical democracy' would have made even better this excellent contribution to the study of the social experiences underlying the crisis of Chilean democracy in the years before 1973.

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Ghosts of Sheridan Circle: How A Washington Assassination Brought Pinochet's Terror State to Justice. By Alan McPherson. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2019. Pp. 392. \$34.95 cloth.
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Alan McPherson has written a fast-paced book clearly aimed at a mass audience. He revisits the 1976 assassinations of Orlando Letelier, former minister of the Salvador Allende government in Chile, and his US coworker Ronni Moffitt, in a car bombing in Washington DC. As an act of state-sponsored foreign terrorism in the US capital, this double assassination was a major event. McPherson, a historian and professor of International Studies, eschews theoretical frameworks or scholarly analysis in favor of accessibility; the book reads like a thriller.

Letelier was a prominent socialist diplomat who had served in the Allende government in several posts. After the military coup of September 11, 1973, Pinochet's forces had detained him and shipped him to the icy Dawson Island prison camp, with other former high-ranking government figures. Eventually freed due to international pressure, Letelier moved to Washington with his family and began working with the Institute of Policy Studies. Letelier was a fierce critic of the human rights atrocities and iron military control in Chile. He cultivated a broad network of contacts, including a number in the US Congress. On September 21, as he drove to work with Michael and Ronni Moffitt, a recently married couple, a remotely detonated explosion destroyed the car and killed Letelier and Ronni Moffitt.

Two previous in-depth studies of this case were published in the early 1980s: *Assassination on Embassy Row* (1980) by John Dinges and Saul Landau, and *Labyrinth* (1982) by Taylor Branch and Eugene M. Propper (Propper was the federal prosecutor of the case). Those books provided extensive detail, and McPherson covers much of the same ground, augmented by new sources from his research in the National Security Archive and records at the Hoover Institution, among other depositories, and interviews with Letelier's family and other key actors. In the last part of the book, the author usefully takes us up to recent times, exploring, for example, the 1995 Chilean trial of Manuel Contreras, head of the sinister secret police Dirección de Inteligencia Nacional (National Intelligence Directorate, or DINA), and his involvement in the assassinations.

Early accounts revealed the role of the Gestapo-like DINA and the ruthless Contreras in the bombing, and more recent books have explored in depth the links between this double assassination and Operation Condor, the covert transnational intelligence-operations system of the 1970s. Under Operation Condor, the South American military regimes coordinated transnational disappearances, torture, illegal transfers, and assassinations of political enemies. As McPherson points out, the Pinochet regime was concerned about Letelier's growing international reputation and his contacts with influential Democrats such as Edward Kennedy and Tom Harkin, and the regime feared that Letelier might set up a government in exile—something he never considered, according to one of his sons.

This reader would like to have seen a deeper critical analysis of some of these events and some of the book's sources. The role of the CIA remains murky, for example. The CIA helped to set up DINA and worked with it as an anticommunist ally, and it did not share crucial knowledge with the prosecutor, as Propper himself told journalist Robert Parry in 1988. At times, McPherson quotes suspect sources such as DINA assassins Michael Townley, a US national and perpetrator of the bombing, who finally turned state's evidence and served an abbreviated sentence, and his wife, Mariana Callejas, also a DINA agent, without much assessment of their credibility. For example, he accepts without interrogation both Townley's claim that the Allende government used torture (51), and the statement in Callejas's book that Townley "was incapable of any kind of violence" (48).

Some tantalizing leads are not explored. In one example, McPherson writes that Contreras petitioned the Chilean Supreme Court to have George H. W. Bush testify regarding his CIA directorship (1976-77) at the time of the double crime. Bush actually answered questions and submitted his testimony via letters rogatory, but McPherson does not discuss the content of Bush's responses or tell us if they are available. Finally, to affirm that this case "brought Pinochet's terror state to justice" seems, unfortunately, overstated.

Overall, the book reminds us of the horrors of security doctrines that targeted civilians as "internal enemies" and implicitly raises questions about US alliances with brutal

dictatorships that practiced state terror in the international arena as well as within their own borders.

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