

Chile and Her History of Western Interference

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Chile is experiencing the largest and most serious political crisis and public unrest throughout Santiago and the country's major cities, since the return to 'democracy' in 1990. A weeklong of fire, teargas and police brutality, left at least 20 people dead, thousands arrested and injured. More than 1.2 million people protested on Friday 25 October in the Streets of Chile's capital, Santiago, not just against the 4% hike in metro-fares. That was the drop that brought the glass to overflow. Years, decades of neoliberal policies, brought hardship and poverty – and inequality to Chileans. Chile is the country with the world's third largest inequality in wealth, with a Gini coefficient of close to 0.50 (zero = everybody has the same, 1.0 = one person possesses everything).

Important for Chileans to understand is not to believe President Sebastian Piñera's smooth talk and compromising words. Whatever he says and apparently does in term of backtracking from his neoliberal policies is sheer deviation propaganda. Many of these policies he already initiated during his first term (2010 – 2014). They were kept alive by Madame Michelle Bachelet (2014 – 2018) under pressure from the Chilean financial system which remains closely linked (and funded) by Wall Street – and, of course, by her IMF advisers. Continuing Piñera's job, she helped further dollarizing Chile to the tune of 70%, meaning that Chilean's banks finance themselves on the US dollar markets, mostly in New York and London, rather than on the local peso market.

A healthy economy finances itself largely from nationally earned and accumulated capital. But more often than not, national oligarchs who possess this capital earned locally invest it outside their countries, as they trust more in foreign markets than in their own country. This is classic in many developing countries and particularly in Latin America, where the elite still – or again, after a brief democratic center-left respite in the 1990s and early 2000 – looks for success and capital gains to the northern masters in Washington.

Madame Bachelet was effectively bought by the system – a former socialist, having seen her father suffer under the Pinochet regime – she has become a sad turncoat. She demonstrated her 'conversion' by her recent report on Venezuela's Human Rights – which was a travesty of the truth – a sham, full of lies and omissions. Another one who sold out – and became chief of a UN Office – the High Commissioner of the UN Human Rights Commission. How did that happen? – Who pulls the strings behind the scenes for such appointments?

Since 2018, it's again President Piñera, who is hellbent to complete his neoliberal project. Sebastian Piñera is one of the richest people in Latin America with a net worth of close to 3 billion dollars. How could he even remotely imagine what it is, having to take the subway every day to go to work, depending on pensions which are gradually reduced under his austerity programs, having to pay school tuition for a public service which is free in most countries and being subject to privatized health services – let alone, steadily depressed salaries and rising unemployment. Mr. Piñera has no clue.

Only 24 hours before the mass-protests started about a week ago throughout Chile, Piñera prided himself in public of leading the politically and economically most stable and secure country, the world's largest copper producer, where foreign investors were keen to place their money, a "paradise island", he called Chile, adding the country was a model for all of Latin America.

Did he really not sense what was happening? How his austerity measures – plus privatizing everything – was hurting and infuriating his compatriots to the point of no return? Or did he simply ignore it, thinking it may go away, people will continue swallowing economic tightening as they have done before? – Whatever – it is amazing!

As Piñera's popularity has slumped to an all-time low of 14%, and protests erupted every day to a higher level, he started using people-friendly language and tone, promising increasing minimum wages, pensions and unemployment benefits. In a move to court the working class, on Monday 28 October he reshuffled his cabinet, replacing 8 of his Ministers with more "people-friendly" officials – but from all appearance it's too little too late.

He addressed the people in a televised speech from the Presidential Palace, La Moneda, saying, "Chile has changed, and the government must change with it to confront these new challenges". Nobody seemed to take these empty words seriously, as the masses assembled in front of La Moneda asking for Piñera's resignation. The UN is sending a team to investigate Human Rights abuses by police and military. While Argentinians waited for regular general elections (27 October 2019) to oust their western-imposed neoliberal lynchpin president Macri, it is not likely that Chileans will have the patience to wait until 2022.

Ever increasing inequality and skyrocketing cost of living reached a point of anger that can hardly be appeased with Piñera's apparent promises for change. For at least 80% of the people these conciliatory words are not enough – they don't believe in a system led by a neoliberal multi-billionaire who has no idea on how common people have to make a living. They don't believe in change from this government. It is highly possible, they won't let go until Piñera is gone. They see what was happening in neighboring Argentina and don't want to face the same fate.

Let's just look at a bit of history. Going way back to the War of the Pacific, also known as the Saltpeter War confronting Chile with the Bolivian-Peruvian alliance, Chile counted with strong support from the UK – supplying war ships, weaponry and military advice. The war lasted from 1879 to 1884 and centered on Chilean claims of Bolivian's coastal territories, part of the Atacama Desert, rich in saltpeter, coveted by the Brits. Thanks to the British military and logistics support, Chile won the war and Bolivia lost her access to the Pacific, making her a landlocked country. The Government of Evo Morales today is still fighting for Pacific Sea access in The Hague. Peru lost also part of her resources-rich coast line, Arica and Tarapacá.

Fast forward to 11 September 1973 – The Chilean 9/11 – instigated by the West, again. To be precise by Washington. In the driver's seat of this fatal coup that changed Chile as of this day – and counting – if Piñera is not stopped – was Henry Kissinger. At the time leading up to the CIA instigated coup, and during the coup, Kissinger was US National Security Advisor (the role John Bolton occupied under Trump, until recently). Kissinger was sworn in a Secretary of State 11 days after the coup – 22 September 1973; a decent reward for whom

is today the biggest war criminal still alive.

The murderous coup, followed by almost 20 years of brutal military rule by Augusto Pinochet (1973 to 1990), with torture, killings, human rights abuses left and right – was accompanied by an atrocious economic regime imposed by Washington hired, so-called “Chicago Boys” – ruining the country, privatizing social services, national infrastructures and natural resources – except for Chile’s and the world’s largest copper mine, CODELCO which was not privatized during the Pinochet years. The military would not allow it – for reasons of “national security”.

The large majority of the population was put under constant surveillance and threat of punishment / abuse if they would protest and not “behave” as Pinochet ordered. Pinochet, along with the western directed financial sector turned Chile into a largely impoverished, complacent population.

The British empire, at the time from London, later from Washington acting as the American empire, was always influential in Chile, expanding its influence and exploitation mechanism to Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Argentina, Brazil and Venezuela. But then, in the late 1990s and early 2000, Latin America stood up, democratically electing her own leaders, most of them left / center-left, a thorn in the eye of Washington.

How could American’s “Backyard” become independent? – Impossible. Hence the renewal of the Monroe Doctrine – which emanated from President James Monroe (1817 -1825), forbidding Europeans to interfere in any American territory. The Monroe principle has now been expanded to not allowing any foreign nation to even do business with Latin America, let alone forming political alliances.

While within a few years in the early 2000s, most of Latin America has been converted into puppets of the United States, Venezuela and Cuba stand tall. They are the corner stones, not to fall. They will be the pillars from where a new sovereign Latin America will rise. The Monroe Doctrine will not hold for a falling US empire – while peace seeking Russia and China are closely associating, commercially as well as militarily, with South America – in rebuilding and defending of their sovereignty.

In addition, people living under neoliberal regimes, under western financial and IMF-imposed killer austerity programs, are waking up, demonstrating and protesting in Ecuador and Argentina – where they just in democratic elections disposed of the US-imposed neoliberal despot, President Mauricio Macri. Now, Chile’s population is angry. Their patience is collapsing, their fear is gone. They want justice. They want to choose freely their leader – and it is not Sebastian Piñera.

Chileans’ fury is not just directed at Piñera’s latest distasteful economic and financial austerity measures. They – the Chileans, still suffer from measures dating back to the Pinochet area – the area of the western Chicago Boys, measures that have never been changed not even under the so-called socialist Madame Bachelet.

The Pinochet Constitution of 1980, under pressure from Chicago-educated advisors, the IMF and the dollar-based banking system, imposed a culture of economic neoliberalism and ideological conservatism. These key parameters, remnants from that epoch, are still valid as of this day:

Education- Chile has the most privatized and segregated education system of the 65 countries that use the OECD student evaluation standard, PISA (Program for International Student Assessment). In Chile higher education (university level) is not a right. In 1981 Pinochet has privatized most of the higher education institutions - giving access mainly to students from privileged families.

Health- in 1979 Pinochet created the Preventive Health Institutions, administered by private financial institutions, providing services that most Chileans cannot afford, i.e. the Fondo Nacional de Salud (FONASE), replacing the former publicly financed health system.

Public Transportation- Chile has one of the most expensive public transport systems in all of Latin America. It's run by private for-profit concessionaries. In Chile a metro ride costs the equivalent of US\$ 1.13, in Brazil US\$ 0.99, in Colombia US\$ 0.67, in Argentina US\$ 0.43. Mr. Piñera's recent 4% tariff increase was just the trigger for a much larger discontent.

Abortion- since 1939 voluntary and secure abortion was possible in Chile. In 1989 Pinochet made abortion under whatever circumstances a criminal delict.

Pensions- In 1980 Pinochet abandoned the old public system based on solidarity among pensioned adults and handed the accumulated funds to newly created and privately run AFPs (Administrations of Pension Funds), groups of private administrators of funds accumulated entirely by workers (no contributions by employers).

"Carabineros" - Chilean Police Officers- under Pinochet, Carabineros have been given powers with military characteristics. They have constantly and with impunity violated human rights. For years civil society groups have requested successive governments - and ultimately again the Piñera Government to change their regime to police officers, respecting human dignity and human rights. So far to no avail, as demonstrated by police interference in the most recent protests.

These Pinochet leftovers will no longer be accepted and tolerated by Chileans. Chile's population, and in particular, the more than 1.2 million protesting in Santiago last Friday, are requesting nothing less than Piñera's resignation and a people's elected Constitutional Assembly to build a new country with less, much less inequality, more social justice - and, especially - without any remaining "*Pinochetismo*"- which today is still very present under Sebastian Piñera, who sent the military to control the mass demonstrations in Santiago and other large cities. Chileans are clearly saying, these days are over - we want our country back - we reclaim our national political and economic sovereignty - no more western interference.

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