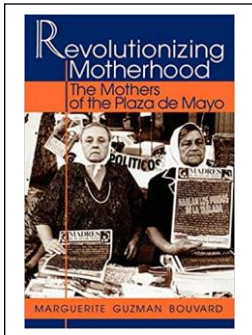
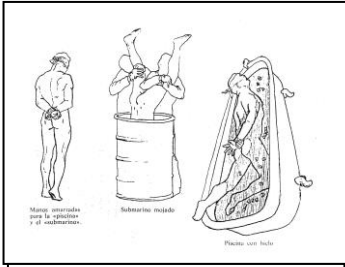


Aim #22: Evaluating Human Rights Violations



Mini Lecture

- In the last 30 years of the 20th century and into the 21st, several extreme, large scale violations of human rights took place in around the globe. These violations could be evaluated using the principles and articles of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- Historians often look at past events to evaluate instances of oppression using the UN Declaration. The atrocities of **Augusto Pinochet in Chile**, **Deng Xiaoping in China**, and **Slobodan Milosevic in Yugoslavia** are important examples- where authoritarian rulers committed widely-reported violations of human rights.
- In addition, **genocides in Cambodia, Rwanda, and Darfur** prompted people to ask what the international community could do to protect people when their own government did not.
- After the fall of **Apartheid in South Africa**, blacks and whites tried to confront their country's past. They created **Truth & Reconciliation Committees** that followed UN Universal Declaration principles as guidelines for their behavior.
- **Nelson Mandela** and other human rights leaders, led the effort in South Africa. Other leaders, such as **Aung San Suu Kyi in Myanmar (Burma)** and the **Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo in Argentina** exemplified the principles in the ways they handled persecution.
- For decades in Chile during the 1900s, the government alternated between liberal and conservative governments and policies. However, people in the political center always moderated the actions of each side's more radical supporters. The country remained peaceful and was model for democracy for South America.
- By 1970, that balance in the political system was gone. A series of liberal and socialist reforms, including seizures of land & redistribution of it to peasants, raised the expectation of Chile's poor & landless and frightened the wealthy landowners & business people. These reforms were championed by what began as a centrist government.
- The election of the socialist candidate **Salvador Allende** as president in 1970 further alarmed the conservatives. Allende began to implement his program to redistribute land & wealth, and wanted to break the grip of foreign companies (U.S.) on Chile's mining wealth.
- On September 11, 1973, military leaders backed by the U.S. took over the government, killing President Allende. General Augusto Pinochet declared himself Chile's ruler. The Chilean Congress was broken up and left-wing parties were outlawed.
- A brutal crackdown on supported of Allende followed. The government denied people legal due process. Thousands of people were imprisoned and tortured. Pinochet's operatives even went beyond Chile's borders- assassinating prominent exiled Chilean opposition leaders in Buenos Aires, Rome, & Washington D.C. During Pinochet's 16-year reign, nearly 3,200 Chileans were killed.
- In Spring 1989, hundreds of thousands of activists and protesters staged a massive protest in Beijing's **Tiananmen Square** calling for more freedoms. After seven weeks of protest, Deng Xiaoping declared martial law and sent troops armed with tanks and assault weapons to shut down the protests- killing hundreds and arresting thousands (estimated by Amnesty International & the Red Cross).
- The Chinese government claimed that nobody died and no mention of the event was included in school textbooks. All websites that discussed the incident and the human rights abuses committed there were blocked.
- Many people from diverse backgrounds have fought and continue to address & confront human rights violations. The following women led the way, setting an example for others.
- Born in 1910 in Macedonia, **Mother Teresa** moved to Ireland at age 18 to join a Roman Catholic religious order and then taught in India for 17 years. She then devoted her life help the sick and poor, opening the Order of Missionaries of Charity and founded a leper colony. Her and her nuns tended to the blind, terminally ill, and disabled. In 1979, in recognition of her tireless work on behalf of the human rights of Calcutta's (India) poor, Mother Teresa won the Nobel Peace Prize.
- **Aung San Suu Kyi** spoke out for human rights in **Burma (Myanmar)**, particularly criticizing the mistreatment of people protesting against the country's military leaders, in support of political prisoners. In response, she was placed under house arrest for 20 years, during which she won the Noble Peace Prize in 1991.
- In 2012, she was allowed to meet with domestic allies and foreign dignitaries. Her continued work to liberalize the political system paid off when Myanmar finally held unrestricted parliamentary elections. Her party won a majority of seats and her close ally became the president. She served as the de facto (in practice) leader in 2016.
- In 1976, the military in Argentina overthrew the country's elected government and unleashed a deadly state-terror campaign of kidnappings, torture, and murders against leftist & other opposition. Victim's children were taken by the government & handed over to be raised by families loyal to the military.
- From 1976-1983, Argentina became known as the **Dirty War**- approximately 30,000 were killed, thousands more detained & tortured by the military junta.
- In spite of the very real danger they faced, a group of women (whose children & grandchildren had disappeared) began to hold weekly vigils in the Plaza de Mayo, which faced the Presidential Palace. They became known as the **Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo**. They did this for 40 years and their campaign brought results. By 2016, 700+ involved in the Dirty War had been tried & convicted for crimes against humanity and genocide.

Review Questions:

1. How were human rights violations in Argentina and Chile similar?
2. List and detail 3 examples of women standing up for and advocating for human rights.

Enduring Issue: Human Rights

What led to Augusto Pinochet's rule in Chile? What human rights violations were committed under his rule?

Directions: Read the excerpts below and respond to the questions.

Augusto Pinochet and the 1973 Chilean coup d'état

The 1973 Chilean coup d'état was a significant event in the history of Chile. This event symbolized the ongoing Cold War conflict between socialism and capitalism. Since the 1970 election of socialist President Salvador Allende, there was political tension between the right-dominated Congress of Chile that advocated a free-market economy and President Allende who advocated for socialist policies.

The conflict reached a boiling point in 1973. Allende's appointed army chief, Augusto Pinochet was the leader of the military **junta** [military group that controls a country after taking power by force] that staged a **coup** to overthrow the socialist government of President Salvador Allende on September 11, 1973. As the national police stormed the presidential palace, Allende gave his last speech, in which he vowed to stay in the presidential palace. However, he was found dead after shooting himself during an attack on the presidential palace in Santiago. In December 1974, the ruling military junta appointed Pinochet Supreme Head of the nation. Until 1990, he led a **dictatorship** under which thousands of **opponents** were tortured.



Members of the military junta that overthrew Salvador Allende on September 11, 1973



September 11, 1973. Bombing of La Moneda (presidential palace)



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Augusto Pinochet

1. Why was there conflict in Chile following the 1970 election of Allende?
2. What happened on September 11, 1973?
3. Who took power after September 11, 1973?

What role did the United States play in Chilean politics?

According to the United States Office of the Historian, although the U.S. Government was initially pleased by the coup, the U.S. became more concerned as reports of **human rights violations** grew. There has been substantial debate on whether the United States provided direct support for Pinochet's coup. A Senate committee was convened in 1975 and the United States has acknowledged their long history of engaging in **covert** actions in Chile by providing funds in support of their desired electoral candidates and running anti-Allende propaganda campaigns, but the committee concluded that there was little evidence to link the U.S. Government to covert support of Pinochet's coup. Despite the United States' findings, several scholars and some Chileans believe that the United States was involved. They call it a U.S.-backed coup.



U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger with Pinochet in 1976



Junta session one week after the 1973 coup

4. According to the text above, what role did the United States say it had in the coup? What role do others say the United States played in the coup?
5. Given the Cold War context, why was the United States excited about Pinochet taking power?
6. Why did the United States begin to grow concerned with Pinochet?

The Beginning of the Dictatorship and Human Rights Abuses

In December 1974, the ruling military junta appointed Pinochet Supreme Head of the nation. Upon taking his official role, he immediately dismantled Congress and **outlawed** many Chilean leftist political parties. Pinochet's takeover of the government ended a 46-year history of democratic rule in Chile. Pinochet became the head of Chile's military government and led a **dictatorship** under which thousands of **opponents** were tortured. In June 1975, Pinochet announced that there would be no future elections in the country.



Women from the Association of the Families of the Disappeared demonstrate in front of the palace of the government during the military rule of Pinochet.

5. What is one of the first things Pinochet did when he took power? How did this strengthen his dictatorship?
6. What type of government did Chile have before Pinochet took over in 1973?
7. Why would Pinochet declare that there would be no future elections? How did this strengthen his dictatorship?

Pinochet was determined to get rid of leftism in Chile and to reassert **free-market policies** for Chile. He is noted to have transformed a bankrupt economy into the wealthiest in Latin America. Even though he led the country into an era of strong economic growth, he has become most well-known for his human rights abuses.

According to a 2006 New York Times article reflecting on his death, Pinochet took many actions that violated human rights to get rid of his opponents and to eliminate **dissent**. For example:

- tens of thousands of Allende sympathizers were rounded up and **brutally interrogated** after the coup
- retired military personnel were named heads of universities, and they carried out **vast purges** or removal of faculty members suspected of left-wing or socialist ideas
- The press was **censored**
- labor strikes and unions were **banned**
- the **National Intelligence Directorate**, or DINA, **persecuted, tortured and killed** Pinochet opponents within Chile and sometimes outside of Chile

Under a new constitution in March 1981, Pinochet remained president for an eight-year term until 1989. In 1989, a national referendum determined whether he served an additional eight-year term. The result of the referendum was a “no” vote of 55 percent and a “yes” vote of 43 percent. Even though he was not supposed to stay in office, he remained in office until free elections selected a new president, the Democrat Patricio Aylwin, on March 11, 1990.



In 1973, after the coup d'état of September 11 that overthrew President Salvador Allende, the facilities of the National Stadium were used as a center of detention and torture as of September 12, 1973. In the enclosure they passed as more detainees of forty thousand people.

8. Which human rights were violated under Pinochet?
9. How did these abuses of human rights help to consolidate Pinochet's power?

Uncovering Human Rights Abuses

The Rettig Report also known as The National Commission for Truth and Reconciliation Report, is a 1991 report by a commission initiated by President Patricio Aylwin to investigate human rights abuses perpetrated by Pinochet and his government from 1973 to 1990, to identify victims, and recommend measures to prevent human rights violations in the future. The report described human rights abuses under Pinochet during his military dictatorship which began on September 11, 1973 and ended on March 11, 1990. The Rettig Report found that 2,279 persons were killed for political reasons. This included 957 people who disappeared after arrest.

10. What is the Rettig Report? Who initiated the Rettig Report?
11. What were the findings of the Rettig report?
12. Why was the Rettig report initiated?
13. Why is this report important for the advancement of human rights?

In 1998, while visiting London, Pinochet was detained by British authorities. Spain had requested his **extradition**, or deportation of a person accused in a crime in another country, in connection with the torture of Spanish citizens in Chile during his rule. As a result of that arrest, the United States and other countries released classified documents concerning human rights abuses against Chileans. What came to light were several operations including Operation Colombo. Operation Colombo was an operation by the Chilean secret police in 1975 to make 119 political dissidents disappear. By January 2000 Pinochet was finally allowed to return home. Even though he was allowed to return home, reports of his human rights abuses continued.

As former president, Pinochet enjoyed immunity from prosecution. This meant he could not be charged for his crimes. However, in 2000, Pinochet was stripped of his immunity from prosecution and was then ordered to stand trial on charges of human rights abuses.

14. Why was the lifting of Pinochet's immunity significant? What did it allow the courts to do?

In 2004, the **Valech Report** (The National Commission on Political Imprisonment and Torture Report) was published. After a six-month investigation, the Valech Report was published as a record of abuses committed in Chile between 1973 and 1990 by agents of Augusto Pinochet's military regime. The Valech Commission's initial report was based on testimony from 35,868 people, of which 27,255 were considered legitimate. The Valech Commission found that over 20,000 people were victims of torture under Pinochet. The Valech Commission delivered its first 1,200-page report to President Ricardo Lagos on November 10, 2004. President Lagos presented it to the nation in a televised speech later that month. He announced that 94% of those detained had been subject to torture and that, of the 3,400 women who gave evidence, almost all had been victims of sexual violence. The Valech Report commission recommended reparation for the identified victims of detention and torture during the military regime.

Pinochet died December 10, 2006. He died having never stood trial for the crimes he was accused of.

15. What is the Valech Report?
16. What were the findings of the Rettig report? What did President Ricardo Lagos announce during his televised speech?
17. Why is this report important for the advancement of human rights?
18. Was Pinochet ever held responsible for his violations of human rights? Explain.