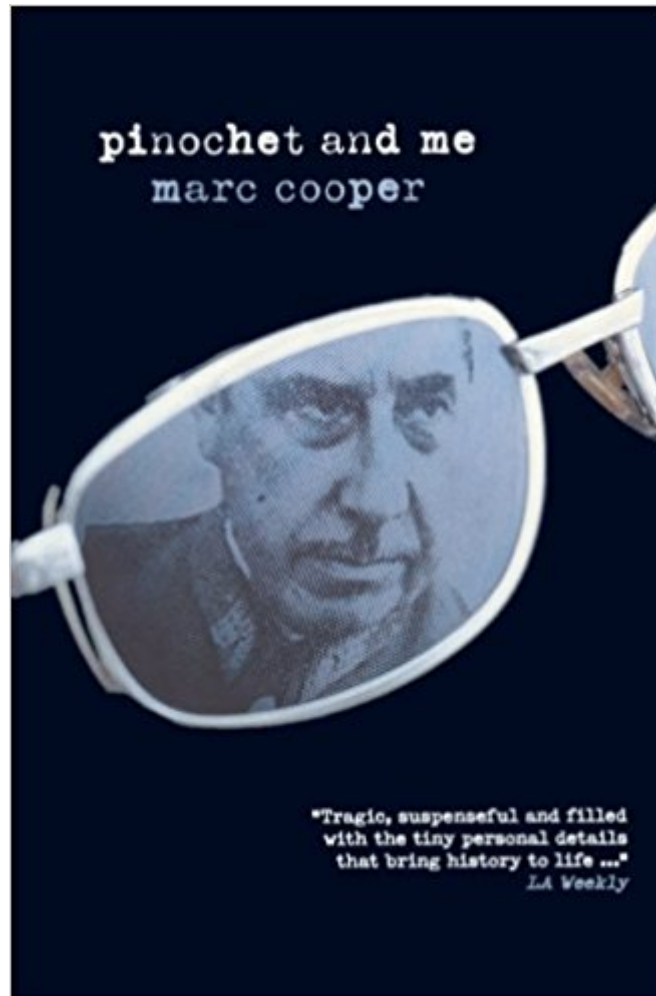




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# Pinochet And Me: A Chilean Anti-Memoir



## Synopsis

The earthshaking news of October 1998 that General Pinochet had been arrested in Britain unleashed two years of international interest in the case and its ramifications for traveling tyrants the world over. But even after the General's return home, the media has ignored the more important story of how his detention lifted a stranglehold that had suffocated Chile's moral sensibility for a generation. Award-winning journalist Marc Cooper was a translator to President Allende until the coup of 1973. In this reflection on Chile and the role it has played in his life, he reconstructs the tense atmosphere of the final days of the Allende government, including his hiding and subsequent evacuation under armed UN protection. Twenty-five years later he returns and recounts, in vivid street-level reporting, a country that is a democracy in name only and a society that has been transfigured by one of the most radical, armed capitalist revolutions of our time. Yet, he argues, spasms of protest that seemed like the last rattle of the snake may still presage the crumbling of Chile's status quo as its people emerge from the long night of reaction to the cry of "Adios General!"

## Book Information

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Marc Cooper, contributing editor to that fine periodical The Nation, was twenty years old when he arrived in Chile in 1971 after being kicked out of the California higher education system by governor Ronald Reagan for his anti-war activities. At the time of the September 11 1973 coup he was a translator for president Allende. This book is made up of notes he made while living in Chile and his visits to it since. It is very well written. When he arrived in Chile, Nixon had ordered "make the

economy scream," CIA money began pouring into opposition media outlets, parliamentarians, far right organizations and military officers, general Rene Schneider had been assassinated and so on. But Allende had the support of the poor majority and his party won handily congressional elections in March 1973. Bands of peasants, impatient that the opposition controlled congress was blocking land reform, took to seizing estates and dividing them amongst themselves. When the military attempted a coup in late June 1973, Allende urged workers to seize control of their workplaces which they did, to the consternation of the communist party, always among the most horrified whenever genuine socialism emerges (as they were during the civil war in Spain). About a week before the coup, a half a million workers took to the streets in support of Allende. But the U.S. backed military had the guns and they acted. Over the next seventeen years, Chileans experienced massive terror. After ten years of neoliberal economics, the economy was on the verge of collapse in 1983, eliciting severe unrest from virtually all of Chile's classes and terrorism in response, particularly against the poor, from Pinochet.

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