Before the rubble: Britain’s secret propaganda offensive in Chile (1960-1973)

Kevin John McEvoy

School of Histories, Languages, and Cultures, University of Liverpool, Liverpool, UK

ABSTRACT

On 11 September 1973, a military coup was successfully launched against Chilean President Salvador Allende. British-made Hawker Hunter jets were used to attack the Chilean presidential palace, and the British government’s swift recognition of Augusto Pinochet caused outrage across the country. A solidarity campaign was launched to oppose the junta, and industrial action was taken to limit the sale of arms to Chile. While Britain’s support of Pinochet is well known, British covert action in Chile prior to the coup is not. This study will use recently declassified documents to demonstrate how, between 1960 and 1973, a secretive propaganda unit within the Foreign Office sought to prevent, and later weaken, an Allende presidency. The unit, named the Information Research Department (IRD), distributed strategically valuable information in order to damage Allende or legitimise his political opponents. Within this propaganda offensive, the IRD collaborated with the US government by sharing intelligence and assisting a CIA offshoot. Private IRD discussions suggest that this policy was guided by a geopolitical desire to keep Latin America on the ‘right side’ of the Cold War. British intervention in Chile will be contextualised by an analysis of the IRD’s furtive march into Latin America after 1949.

On 11 September 1973, British-made Hawker Hunter jets—manned by Chilean military officials—descended on Santiago and turned to rubble both the presidential palace and the foundations of Chilean democracy. The coup against Chilean President Salvador Allende, as well as the British government’s recognition of the military junta eleven days later, provoked outrage in Britain. A Chilean solidarity campaign was mobilised within days of the coup, which leveraged sustained pressure on the British government until General Augusto Pinochet was forced to step down in 1990. Even at the turn of the century, the Chilean coup remained a cause célèbre within British politics. In 1999, following Pinochet’s arrest in London for human-rights crimes, British Prime Minister Tony Blair told the Labour Party conference that he found the former dictator ‘unspeakable’ while Peter Mandelson, one of New Labour’s most prominent figures, said that most British people would find it ‘gut-wrenching’ to see him evade justice.
The Chilean coup produced a clear line of demarcation between the Conservative and Labour Parties with regards to foreign policy. While the Conservative government of Edward Heath (1970–1974) had rushed to recognise Pinochet, the Labour governments of Harold Wilson (1974–1976) and James Callaghan (1976–1979) are widely seen as an early example of an ‘ethical foreign policy’.\(^3\) Between 1974 and 1979, for instance, Britain applied unilateral sanctions against Chile, including an arms embargo and the removal of the British ambassador in Santiago.\(^4\) Once Margaret Thatcher’s Conservative government was elected in 1979, however, friendly relations with the Pinochet regime were restored; Thatcher would later call Pinochet a ‘staunch, true friend’ of Britain.\(^5\)

While the Labour governments of the 1970s were certainly more amenable to public pressure on Chile, bipartisan hostility to an Allende government during the decade prior to the coup sets Labour’s later ‘ethical foreign policy’ in a new light. Under the first Wilson government (1964–1970), a secretive unit within the British Foreign Office initiated a propaganda offensive in Chile with the primary objective of preventing an Allende presidency. The unit, named the Information Research Department (IRD), was Britain’s Cold War propaganda arm, responsible for processing and sharing non-attributable information within its areas of operation.\(^6\) Early planning documents defined the unit’s core aim as to ‘check the inroads of communism, by taking the offensive against it […] and to give a lead to our friends abroad and help in the anti-communist struggle’, though targets of IRD operations soon broadened to include any perceived threats to British interests.\(^7\) The IRD first began operating in Latin America in the late 1940s, after which it began translating and dispensing key anti-communist material through trusted political, media, and military sources in the region. In Chile, the IRD continued in this vein by gathering strategically valuable information designed to damage Allende or legitimise his political opponents, and distributing this information to influential figures within Chilean society. The IRD also monitored prominent left-wing figures and organisations in Chile, including intellectuals, trade union federations, and political leaders. Within Britain’s propaganda offensive in Chile, the IRD shared intelligence and advice with the US government and, shortly after Allende was elected, British officials in Santiago assisted a CIA-funded media organisation which attempted to shape the official narrative about US involvement in the coup. In the immediate aftermath of the coup, moreover, IRD officials attempted to influence British journalists in order to sanitise the incoming military regime, while monitoring and gathering intelligence on the British Chilean Solidarity Campaign (CSC).

In light of British covert propaganda operations in Chile, this study argues that Britain played a hidden role in the coup against Allende, though this role was probably not decisive and certainly less significant than that of the US. As a result, it proposes a revision to the traditional understanding of the Chilean coup, which held that only the US intervened in Chile in the years running up to 1973.\(^8\) Meanwhile, British efforts to prevent an Allende presidency prompt a careful revision of British Cold War policy towards Latin America. While Britain is conventionally thought to have viewed Latin America as a peripheral area of interest during the Cold War, private discussions among IRD officials suggest that Britain had a greater strategic interest in the region than traditionally understood.\(^9\) If Allende could implement structural economic reform in Chile with success, British planners feared that a precedent might be set for the rest of the region to
follow suit. Moreover, IRD officials believed that support for US objectives in Chile might advance Britain’s global standing at a time of decline. Geopolitical concerns, these documents suggest, fuelled British interference in Chile during the 1960s and early 1970s.

While Britain’s relationship with the Pinochet regime is partially covered ground, British involvement in Chile in the years preceding the coup is not. Indeed, the conventional analysis of British policy in Chile asserts that Britain merely reacted to events in September 1973. Grace Livingstone’s Britain and the Dictatorships of Argentina and Chile, for instance, is the only primary source-based study which focuses on contemporary British relations with Chile. While Livingstone examines with precision the various pressures guiding British policy in Chile, the changing nature of British relations with the Pinochet regime, and the emergence of the Chile solidarity campaign, her point of departure is nonetheless 1973—the end date of the present study.

While this article therefore represents the only primary source-based study focussing on covert British interference in Chile between 1960 and 1973, it also contributes to an emerging body of research on the IRD’s operations in Latin America during the Cold War. At the time of writing, almost every area-based study of the IRD has concentrated on the unit’s activities in the British Colonies, Eastern Europe, the Middle East, and Northern Ireland. While the IRD’s Cold War presence in Latin America has at times been acknowledged, the only region-specific historical studies remain Geraldo Cantarino’s Segredos da Propaganda Anticomunista and Rory Cormac’s recent article ‘The currency of covert action: British special political action in Latin America, 1961–64’. Cormac’s study offers the first scholarly account of IRD operations across the region, with reference to IRD operations in Brazil, Peru, Ecuador, Bolivia, Mexico, and Chile during the early 1960s.

There are a number of reasons why British involvement in Chile between 1960 and 1973 has remained missing within the current historiography, absent James Lockhart’s research on Anglo-Chilean cooperation in nuclear science and technology between 1955 and 1970. British involvement in Latin America during the Cold War was conventionally understood to be marginal, and the topic has only recently emerged as an area of wider historical interest. The US declassification process, moreover, may have facilitated the formation of the dominant narrative regarding the Chilean coup. Indeed, although the US government continues to withhold certain documents relating to Chile, it nonetheless began releasing key documents within years of the coup (and, notably, these documents made no reference to British covert operations). Perhaps most importantly, the British government only began declassifying key IRD documents on Chile in December 2019. Marked either Top Secret, Secret, or Confidential, many of these files were released as many as 57 years after the fact, and most still contain significant redactions. This study therefore builds on the emerging field of British Cold War intervention in Latin America with substantial reference to recently declassified documents held in the British National Archives.

**Britain cannot ‘stand by and watch’: the IRD’s furtive march into Latin America**

IRD officials were first posted to Latin America in 1949—one year after the department’s creation—and, though early cables suggest that the department was slow to adapt to the cultural necessities of the region. Transcription services, for instance, were not
immediately available in Spanish and Portuguese.\textsuperscript{19} A 1948 cable sent from the British embassy in Lima complained bluntly that IRD material ‘was too long, too scientific, and not in Spanish’.\textsuperscript{20} Meanwhile, much of the IRD’s earliest material promoted Britain as a Protestant nation, offering little promise to inspire a largely Catholic Latin America.\textsuperscript{21} Despite these teething pains, a sense of urgency mounted within the unit with regards to Latin America. In 1951, IRD planners noted with concern that ‘there have been one or two recent indications that the Communists are increasing their activities in Latin America and we are accordingly anxious that’ IRD officers ‘should maintain, if not increase, your output’.\textsuperscript{22}

In order to effectively counter communist activity in the region, the ‘four main responsibilities’ for the IRD in Latin America were listed as: ‘to remain abreast of new developments in Communist theory and tactics; to report on Communist activities; to carry out anti-Communist propaganda and to undertake SPA [Special Political Activity] operations’.\textsuperscript{23} According to a planning paper, these operations should be aimed at the ‘standard IRD targets in Latin America’: ‘(a) the men in power and those likely to come to power or exert influence [. . .] and (b) university professors, students, trade union leaders, and those likely to enter politics in the future’, as well as ‘peasants and women’.\textsuperscript{24} Agents of influence, and not the population at large, were IRD’s principal targets.

While fervently anti-communist, IRD material was tempered to appeal to broad sections of the Latin American left. As one IRD planning document reads:

\begin{quote}
We only stand to lose heavily if we try to make the choice in Latin America: communism or capitalism; our line hitherto has been: communism has not the only or the best answer to your problems; and to give as much information as we can about non-Communist ways of tackling them. Even though British methods may not all be suited to Latin America, evidence that a mixed economy does not necessarily mean dictatorial rule is useful.\textsuperscript{25}
\end{quote}

In order to pursue this line, the IRD did ‘its best to pay special attention to the non-Communist left’ in Latin America since ‘too much negative anti-Communist propaganda tends to be counter-productive insofar as the reformist and moderate left is concerned’.\textsuperscript{26} As in other arenas of IRD operation, British planners understood the strategic importance of co-opting the non-communist left.\textsuperscript{27}

Once the IRD had defined its \textit{modus operandi} in Latin America, operations began. In a 1952 report, Foreign Office planners discussed the targeting of non-communist trade unions in the Third World, boasting how ‘the general recognition of the Peace Campaign as a Communist racket can easily be attributed mainly to our information services’.\textsuperscript{28} The report continued that, ‘in particular, we might mention that the much advertised Latin-American Peace Conference, having been hounded and harried first from Mexico and then Brazil, had finally to be held in a back room in Montevideo’.\textsuperscript{29} The Inter-Continental Peace Conference of 1952 was a Soviet-aligned event, and attended by over 300 delegates from ten countries of the Western hemisphere.\textsuperscript{30} In the lead up to the event, British information officers distributed information to Latin American trade unionists urging them not to attend. ‘In most cases’, wrote British officials, ‘the original stimulus [not to attend] came from the British side and much British material has been used by them.’\textsuperscript{31}

More significantly, the IRD was buying the rights to anti-communist literature and translating it into Spanish and Portuguese for distribution across the continent. One of the key texts was George Orwell’s \textit{Animal Farm}, described by IRD chief Ralph Murray as
'brilliant satire on the Communist regime in the USSR' and 'a most effective propaganda weapon, because of its skilful combination of simplicity, subtlety and humour'. By late 1950, IRD officials noted that they had successfully placed a cartoon strip of Animal Farm—designed and translated by the IRD—in Lima’s El Comercio; in Mexico’s La Prensa; in ‘the main government paper’ in Bogotá; in Montevideo’s El Sol; in Quito’s El Dia; and in Caracas’ El Heraldo. By the early 1960s, moreover, the IRD field officer in Brazil noted that the book version of Animal Farm had been ‘selling very well and certain organisations are pushing it’ such that he need not distribute copies himself. Much of this kind of material was processed through the IRD’s Regional Information Services Office for Latin America in Mexico City, which was responsible for taking material made in Britain and making it suitable for the 18 Spanish-speaking countries of the region, as well as its production and distribution. ‘In Mexico, which is among the least anti-Western of the Latin American States’, wrote one IRD planner from Mexico City in 1963, ‘the IRD Centre can operate more or less overtly as an adjunct to British Information Services, and IRD material has a ready acceptance in the Mexican press’. During the late 1960s, the IRD also attempted to fund a regional news service in Latin America. In 1968, British news agency Reuters had fallen into financial difficulty and requested assistance from the British government to develop services in the Middle East and Latin America. After prolonged negotiations between Reuters and the IRD, the British government agreed to pay ‘a secret subsidy of £45,000 per year to Reuters for Latin American services’ through an IRD front company named RNS (LA). In return for government funds, IRD planners expected that Reuters ‘would have to give something in return, in addition to the mere continuation of services to the two geographical areas concerned’. The ultimate goal, as the files suggest, was ‘the dissemination of information in order to promote stability in our trading areas’. By November 1968, Reuters seemed to have made significant progress in Latin America. Reuters staff informed the Foreign Office in November that they were ‘hopeful about developments’ in Latin America since they ‘now had agreement with eight of the twelve most powerful newspaper interests to form a Latin American News Agency, taking Reuters Service, which they believed would revolutionise the news industry in the continent’. While Reuters made plans to influence the continent’s largest news outlets, the IRD also focused on cultivating prominent Latin American journalists. In 1964, Brazilian daily Última Hora—with a circulation ranging between 350,000 and 800,000—was the only newspaper to defend the government of João Goulart and oppose the military coup. Given its critical reporting, Última Hora’s editor Samuel Wainer was temporarily forced into exile by the military dictatorship. Upon his return to Brazil in 1967, IRD officials worked on Wainer in order to blunt his newspaper’s radical edge. Indeed, IRD planners viewed Brazil’s military government as a natural ally. IRD official Leslie Fry wrote shortly after the coup that ‘we now have the opportunity to work openly with a new regime which is friendly and anti-Communist. So our British effort, of which IRD activities are only a part, should be devoted to helping the new regime’. As such, the IRD attempted to contain criticism of the military government. In 1969, IRD officials boasted that the unit’s field officer in Rio de Janeiro, R.A. Wellington, had ‘assiduously cultivated’ Wainer after a number of private meetings. IRD operations had, officials boasted, transformed Última Hora ‘from a quasi-communist, extreme left, newspaper into a respected opposition daily’.


British planners also viewed the BBC as a key vehicle of cultural diplomacy in Latin America. Within its first independent enquiry on British overseas information services, the Cabinet Office noted in 1953 that, despite diminishing resources, the BBC had acquired ‘a very high reputation in the Latin-American Republics’ since ‘the people in this region value links with Europe as a means of counter-balancing US influence which, although inevitable, has never been popular.’ Post-war cuts, the enquiry added, had therefore ‘been a grave mistake from a commercial point of view’. Four years later, a Cabinet Paper noted that the BBC had expanded its transcription service in Latin America to the cost of £50,000 and was considering installing a relay transmitter in the Caribbean costing £1,000,000. By the late 1960s, moreover, the IRD was involved in scripting two of the BBC’s political commentaries per week, which could be relayed to Chile in Spanish via Ascension Island.

Throughout this period, British planners were discussing the mounting strategic importance of Latin America. In an IRD planning document written in 1964, British officials emphasised that Latin America ‘is a vital area in the Cold War and checking a Communist takeover here is at least as important a British national interest as negotiating trading and stepping up exports. Unlike many parts of the world where we are fighting Communism, here we have many active and intelligent and courageous friends and allies amongst the local population [emphasis added]’. The report added that Latin America was the ‘special concern’ of the US and, given that the ‘average Latin American is emotionally anti-Yankee’, Britain should attempt to influence ‘changes in a reasonable direction’.

Although Britain had ‘priorities elsewhere in the world where British interests are more directly concerned’, the Foreign Office felt obliged to assist the US in Latin America by drawing on Britain’s own reserve of good-will. British officials noted the same year, moreover, that the US was ‘anxious for the United Kingdom to do as much as possible in the propaganda field [in Latin America], and this is now reflected by USIA [US Information Agency] representatives in the field’. Remarkably, IRD officials privately boasted that, owing to plausible deniability of British covert operations in the region, ‘as elsewhere in Latin America we can cover areas closed to the Americans’. The perception that Britain had no active policy in the region, in other words, facilitated British covert action.

The strategic importance of Latin America was reaffirmed in 1966 when British Foreign Secretary Michael Stewart told the Cabinet that ‘the adhesion of Latin America to communism would decisively swing the balance [of Cold War power] against ourselves and our allies’. Stewart thus noted that ‘it is an important British interest that Latin America should remain in the free world and we should do what we can to help’, and visited the region the same year. Indeed, British planners saw US hegemony in the Americas as a key basis of the global economic order. The US government, observed Stewart, ‘considers the area more important than any other to its security’. As a result, Britain could not ‘stand by and watch’ as Latin America was struck by a ‘social and economic malaise’, and Britain should therefore have a more ‘active [...] presence in the political, cultural and, above all, the economic field’. British planners thus viewed Latin America as a continental domino, where political developments could have consequences for the balance of Cold War power globally. Chile soon became the key focus of these concerns.
The IRD in Chile: anyone but Allende

On 4 September 1970, Salvador Allende stood on a balcony of the Federation of Chilean Students in Santiago to deliver his presidential victory speech. ‘Victory wasn’t easy’, he declared, ‘and it will be just as difficult to consolidate our victory and build a new society, a new social contract, a new morality, and a new nation’.\(^{57}\) Though the Popular Unity (UP) alliance had won by a thin margin, Allende vowed that ‘as soon as we get to Moneda […], we will fulfil the historic promise that we’ve made: to make reality the political programme put forth by Unidad Popular’.\(^{58}\) According to a 1967 Unidad Popular manifesto, the objective of this programme would be ‘the replacement of the present economic structure, doing away with the power of foreign and national monopoly capital and of the latifundio [large estate] in order to initiate the construction of socialism’.\(^{59}\)

Before he was removed by military coup on 11 September 1973, Allende pursued Chile’s ‘transition to socialism’ based on three pillars: the expansion of public ownership through the nationalisation of domestic and foreign enterprise; the redistribution of income and services to the poorest 60% of Chileans; and the provision of mechanisms for worker participation in the management of industry.\(^{60}\) In line with these objectives, between 1971 and 1973, UP fully nationalised the US copper mines, nationalised 90% of the country’s banking system, expropriated almost all latifundios and numerous medium-sized farms (by 1973, roughly one third of all agricultural land had been reformed), and recognised workers’ control of a number of enterprises.\(^{61}\) The transformation of the Chilean economy was so significant that even Britain’s Joint Intelligence Committee remarked in 1971 that ‘the Allende government has been directing its economic efforts primarily at effecting a redistribution of income’ in an effort to ‘put right what they regard as economic and social injustices’.\(^{62}\)

Despite this fleeting recognition of economic disparities in Chile, Allende’s reforms seemed diametrically opposed to British interests both in Chile and throughout the region. Indeed, almost every Foreign Office policy report on Latin America since 1945 had insisted on the retention of British financial and commercial interests, citing nationalisation as a key strategic threat.\(^{63}\) The British government’s response to the removal of Allende four years later further highlighted the conflicts between British interests and Allende’s economic programme. On 13 September, two days after the coup, Foreign Secretary Alec Douglas-Home told British ambassador to Chile Reginald Secondé that ‘We still have enough at stake in economic relations with Chile to require good relations with the government in power’.\(^{54}\) Secondé responded with enthusiasm that ‘the current regime has infinitely more to offer British interests than the one which preceded it’.\(^{65}\) On 19 September, the ambassador added that ‘most British businessmen […] will be overjoyed at the prospect of consolidation which the new military regime offers’. British companies, he claimed, ‘are all breathing sighs of relief’—‘Now is the time to get in’.\(^{56}\)

The Foreign Office cables sent in the immediate aftermath of the coup—most of which were declassified in the early 2000s—have served to inform the conventional analysis of British policy towards both the Allende and Pinochet governments. According to this analysis, the nationalisation of Chilean industry, particularly copper, motivated the British government to recognise a military junta which restored an economic stability favourable to foreign capital—even if it did cause diplomatic embarrassment by engaging in torture, political oppression, and human rights abuses. As historian Mark Curtis wrote in 2007, ‘the loss of half a million pounds [in foreign exchange due to rises in copper prices] was
deemed more important than the overthrow of a largely successful democratically elected government’. In 2018, Grace Livingstone similarly emphasised the relationship between British business interests and policy in Chile during the 1970s.

To be sure, the nationalisation of copper was met with concern by British planners. A Foreign Office brief written on 19 September 1973 noted that Britain’s ‘major interest in Chile is copper. Although there was no UK investment in the mining industry we import about one third of our copper from Chile. [...] We therefore have a major interest in Chile regaining stability, regardless of politics’. However, British concerns about the threat of resource nationalism in Latin America had been fomenting for a decade prior to the coup, and Chile presented an opportunity to assist the US in thwarting a socialist victory at the ballet box.

Within this context, plans for Britain’s propaganda offensive in Chile began in 1962 with an eye towards the country’s 1964 presidential election. Initial planning was based on the recommendations of the Counter-subversion Committee’s Working Group on Latin America, a Cabinet Office unit which advised the IRD to appoint a field officer to Santiago in the event of a victory for either Allende or the centre-left Christian Democrat candidate Eduardo Frei. A ‘dramatic rise in the temperature’ occurred in early 1964 when the radical left Popular Action Front (FRAP) alliance, led by Allende, claimed by-election victory. The Committee thus cautioned that ‘whether Frei or Allende were elected’ in 1964, ‘Chile would have a government further to the left than ever before and pledged to radical reform’.

While the Committee could stomach that ‘Frei’s policies are likely to be almost as unpopular with foreign investors as those of Allende’, planners feared that once in power Allende ‘would be manoeuvred by the communists, either willingly or otherwise, and [...] the end-product might well be a Government on the Cuban pattern’. The Committee thus argued that if Frei succeeds, ‘he will prove that there is an alternative to Castroist revolution; the importance of such a success could hardly be overestimated’. ‘Congressional elections are due on March 7 1965’, the Committee concluded, ‘and it will be important to prevent significant gains by the extreme left then and later’. Almost a decade prior to the coup, British covert action in Chile centred around preventing Allende’s accession to power.

Frei won the 1964 presidential election with 56.1% of the vote, with Allende winning 38.9%. According to senior IRD official Elizabeth R. Allott, Britain had covertly worked to support Frei’s campaign, though this work ‘was limited to the distribution of our more serious material to reliable contacts and to securing the publication of certain press articles’ in order ‘to avoid any appearance of interference in local affairs’. A key recipient of IRD material in this period was the Chilean Instituto Privado de Estudio Economicos y Sociales (the Private Institute of Economic and Social Studies), as well as the Chilean Committee of the CIA-funded Congress for Cultural Freedom.

British planners viewed the election result in triumphalist terms. Within days of the election, Allott declared that ‘I do not think we could overestimate the importance of doing all we can to help Frei carry out his slogan “Reform without Revolution” (and, we should add, “without resort to Communist dictatorship”). Since Frei’s reformism could lend itself to Communist and Socialist exploitation’ of those Chileans ‘whose expectations are too slowly or inadequately fulfilled’, Allott reemphasised the importance of propaganda operations to maintain stability in Chile. The IRD, she wrote, should ‘help maintain a climate of opinion favourable to reform’ in Chile by distributing ‘specially prepared material on Communist attempts to delay and frustrate the introduction of
reforms (e.g. Italy’), adding that ‘it will also be important to prevent the Communists’ relative failure to penetrate the universities from being reversed’.\textsuperscript{81} In line with the Counter-subversion Committee’s recommendations, the IRD worked to promote Frei’s reformism as a manageable political programme.

IRD planners also saw how events in Chile could influence regional and global political currents. In an IRD planning document, Allott noted with concern that communist Yugoslavia retained a diplomatic mission in Santiago, that the Frei government may be ‘less opposed than its predecessor to the staging in Santiago of international Communist front meetings’, that Britain should ‘encourage and profit from the co-ordination and development of Christian Democratic activity’ across the region, and that ‘the influence which events in Chile have on intellectuals throughout Latin America’ was considerable.\textsuperscript{82} Notably, Allott also deliberated ‘SPA [Special Political Action] with supporting action from the US’ in order to ‘break up (with or without Chinese help) the Communist/Socialist alliance’ which in Chile ‘had always been an uneasy one on both the political and trade union fields’.\textsuperscript{83}

In light of these wide-ranging concerns, Allott concluded after the 1964 election that ‘in Chile we surely have a rare opportunity’: ‘if we believe our work in Latin America to be important, then there are surely few places which have a better claim on our resources and where there is such scope for us in both our negative and constructive roles’.\textsuperscript{84} Assistant Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs L.C. Glass agreed, writing in September 1964 that there was ‘a victory against the Communists to press home; a government to support whose policies, if carried out effectively, offer what is probably the best chance we have had in the continent of robbing the communists of their raison d’être’.\textsuperscript{85} For IRD planners, events in Chile were thus tightly woven into the tapestry of Cold War relations—presenting risks and rewards for British interests.

Despite the post-election optimism, an IRD field officer was not immediately appointed to Santiago in 1964 due to financial restrictions—‘a real disappointment’, in the view of the Counter-subversion Committee.\textsuperscript{86} Nonetheless, as the prospect of an Allende victory increased throughout the latter half of the 1960s, so too did IRD activity in Chile. Shortly before the 1970 presidential election, IRD planners in Santiago noted with concern that ‘there has been a gradual shift in support from the centre to both left and right. In next year’s election the left will challenge strongly’.\hfill {\textsuperscript{87}}[……] Indeed a “Marxist” government is not impossible’.\hfill {\textsuperscript{87}} An IRD planning document similarly remarked that, since Allende’s UP alliance could ‘entertain hopes of coming to power through peaceful means’ in 1970, ‘Chile is in the front line as far as Communism in South America is concerned’.\textsuperscript{88} As such, an IRD field officer was posted to Chile shortly before 1969; Santiago would become one of only five Latin American posts where it had been ‘decided to retain IRD specialists pending post-Duncan [report] inspections’.\textsuperscript{89}

IRD operations in the lead up to the 1970 election focused most clearly on preventing Allende from ascending to the presidency. On 13 July 1970, Allott briefed British ambassador to Chile D.H.T. Hildyard that:

\emph{the IRD operation therefore has been concentrating on preventing an extreme left from gaining power in the 1970 presidential elections, and on helping suitable organisations which are likely to continue in existence whatever happens at the elections. The IRD field officer (Grade Five) has very close contacts with specialist officials in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, [redacted], and certain student organisations [emphasis added].\textsuperscript{90}}
This is the clearest instance of British interference in Chile’s 1970 election.

As well as launching a propaganda campaign against Allende, a significant proportion of IRD work was dedicated to gathering intelligence on influential Chilean movements and figures. In 1969, IRD planners were closely monitoring the Permanent Congress of Trade Union Unity of Latin America (CPUSTAL), a Soviet-aligned federation of Latin American trade unions founded in 1964. IRD received CPUSTAL literature which was ‘sent out by [...] a non-existent trade union in St. Lucia’, suggesting British government sources, or perhaps British intelligence officials, had created bogus trade unions in order to gather intelligence on trade union activity in the region. Ironically, the literature they received condemned ‘the sabotage that some organisations of imperialism try to achieve in order to divide the Latin American workers, and thus allowing them to dominate the economics’. Separate IRD files also reveal that a British labour attaché, whose role was typically to monitor trade unions and cultivate syndicalist sources, had been dispatched to Chile during the 1960s.

While these documents provide the first comprehensive evidence of British electoral interference in Chile during the 1960s and 1970s, full details of the IRD operation remain classified. Indeed, over fifty years after the fact, IRD documents on Chile remain heavily redacted and, according to Livingstone, many more Foreign Office documents have been destroyed or ‘lost’. In this light, IRD documents on Brazil during the same period could offer a valuable window into the specifics of the IRD’s operations in Chile. In line with the IRD’s objective ‘to go for those persons who matter and who can make good use of the material supplied’, British ambassador to Brazil Sir David Hunt revealed in 1968 the full scope of IRD activities: ‘IRD material is regularly sent to the Brazilian Minister of Education [...]’, the Minister of Justice, the Chief of Staff of the Army, the Escola Superior de Guerra, senior Army and Naval Officers, CENIMAR [Intelligence]’, as well several religious figures, ‘congressmen, judges, state governors’, and leftist intellectuals.

Perhaps more significantly, Wellington wrote to Allott in 1969 that the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs had requested access to an IRD training course in the UK. Later that year, IRD officials noted that ‘we gave a fortnight’s training course in June 1969 to two members of a special intelligence group within the [Brazilian] Ministry of Foreign Affairs’. The course was given at the Psychological Warfare Section of Old Sarum, and ‘the trainees were going to suggest to their Ministry of Defence that they might investigate sending members of the armed forces on other British army courses’. Three years later, British ambassador David Hunt privately acknowledged that the Brazilian military had ‘in the past been influenced by suggestions and advice emanating from us’ with regards to ‘sophisticated methods of interrogation’—an allusion to torture.

It seems plausible that the same techniques were taught by Britain to the Chilean Armed Forces in the months before the 1970 election. On 13 July 1970, Allott wrote to IRD official Mr Crook about the weight of demands being placed on the IRD in Chile: ‘I suggested that [ambassador] Mr Hildyard should be warned that the valuable contacts that [IRD specialist officer] Mr Dyer has built up [...] have led to demands and will go on doing so, that we cannot meet’. IRD’s operational limits, it seems, were being stretched in Chile. Nonetheless, Allott invited Crook to ‘refer to the training we have given to the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and to the Colombian Ministry of Defence’ in the field of ‘counter-subversion’ as a possible avenue for additional assistance. While it remains unclear whether this training transpired, it is significant
that the Foreign Office discussed assisting the Chilean military in ‘counter-subversion’ akin to that offered to Brazil just months before Allende was elected, and three years before the military junta took power.

**The IRD and Washington’s propaganda offensive in Chile**

The IRD’s propaganda offensive in Chile throughout the 1960s—which entailed ‘preventing an extreme left’ victory by ‘helping suitable organisations’, maintaining close ties with the Chilean military, and gathering intelligence on influential organisations and figures—closely parallels that launched by Washington in the same period. According to a declassified report on US covert activity in Chile, the CIA ‘undertook various propaganda activities, including distributing posters and leaflets’ in order to prevent an Allende victory in 1964. Three years later, the CIA ‘set up a propaganda mechanism for making placements in radio and news media’ and, in 1968, approved a ‘political action plan program to support individual moderate candidates’ running in the 1969 congressional elections. In 1970, the CIA organised ‘spoiling operations’ against Allende and, that failing, engaged in a three-year campaign to politically ‘assassinate’ him by funnelling ‘millions of dollars to strengthen opposition political parties’. Between 1970 and 1973, moreover, the CIA extensively collaborated with and funded Chilean newspaper *El Mercurio* since ‘without it’, as a National Security Council memo reads, ‘the Allende Government would have much clearer sailing’. Between 1964 and 1973, the CIA spent at least $14 million on covert operations in Chile, which the agency summarised in the following way:

> It financed activities covering a broad spectrum, from simple propaganda manipulation of the press to large-scale support for Chilean political parties, from public opinion polls to direct attempts to foment a military coup. The scope of “normal” activities of the CIA Station in Santiago included placement of Station-dictated material in the Chilean media through propaganda assets, direct support of publications, and efforts to oppose communist and left-wing influence in student, peasant and labor organizations.

Washington’s interests in Chile closely paralleled those of Britain. According to a 1970 briefing paper prepared by National Security Adviser Henry Kissinger for US President Richard Nixon, Allende posed ‘one of the most serious challenges ever faced in the hemisphere’. Kissinger continued, in a similar vein to IRD planners, that: ‘The example of a successful elected Marxist government in Chile would surely have an impact on an even precedent value for other parts of the world, especially in Italy; the imitative spread of similar phenomenon elsewhere would in turn significantly affect the world balance and our own position in it’.

Given the similarity of objectives, it is not surprising that the British and US governments collaborated in their efforts to prevent an Allende government. IRD documents show that the Foreign Office actively cooperated with Washington’s propaganda offensive and accommodated a CIA offshoot visiting Chile shortly after Allende was elected. Yet while Britain and US propagandists shared the core objective of preventing an Allende government, Britain was far more sympathetic to promoting the Christian Democrats and advocating for economic reform during the late 1960s.
In February 1969, IRD specialist officer A.S. Dyer wrote from the British embassy in Santiago that ‘the Americans asked me if I thought [Chilean right-wing magazine] P.E.C. was following the right lines’ on anti-Allende propaganda. While Dyer agreed ‘that there is a scope here for an official anti-Communist and pro-American newspaper’, he nonetheless argued that ‘I do not think [P.E.C.] are right in attacking the Christian Democrat Party as they do’. Dyer was confident that the IRD could produce articles on the Americans’ lines, though he privately doubted ‘if it would be profitable to do so’. Yet despite such reservations, Dyer drafted a list of ‘the kind of men and women who could’ provide the US with their desired content, including Mario Carneyro of La Segunda, Nicolás Velasco of Últimas Noticias, and Arturo Fontaine and Hermógenes Perez de Arce of El Mercurio.

In a later correspondence between British information officer C.G. Morris and Allott, Morris noted that ‘the Americans in Santiago are anxious to suggest that “all talk of non-capitalist development is Communist-inspired” and have asked if we could produce articles to support this line’. Morris, however, was similarly concerned that this approach ‘invites […] people to feel that they may perhaps have more in common with the Communists than with PEC and the Americans’. The Americans, in other words, were ‘possibly taking a too extreme line’. As a result, Morris recommended that the Americans develop ‘the idea that all development is “capitalist”, one way or another, and that a rational combination of private and public enterprise is almost certainly a preferable alternative’. This recommendation was guided by the perceived risk of ‘alienating all but the right-wing laissez-faire capitalist mentality, which is going increasingly out of fashion’. Contrary to US dogmatism, British propaganda seemed more sophisticated in its tendency towards moderation. In this sense, Anglo-American propaganda operations in Chile were not unique. Globally, IRD often worked alongside Washington’s information agencies when interests converged although, as in Chile, this did not necessarily mean a convergence of strategy or an equal division of labour.

In March 1973, six months before the coup, Britain and the US were still sharing intelligence on social movements in Chile. On 20 March, an official from the US embassy in London, James M. Murphy, wrote to the Foreign office about the upcoming ‘World Labour Assembly’ meeting in Santiago. Murphy noted with concern that ‘the importance of multinational corporations in the view of the trade union movement […] is likely to occupy more and more an important place in the propaganda activities of the communist trade unions’. As a result, Murphy proposed that both countries ‘look carefully at the results of this meeting to see if we can read the outlines of future communist labour strategy’. The Foreign Office obliged, noting that ‘the aspects affecting multi-national corporations’ were also of particular importance to Britain.

One month after Allende was elected, the IRD secretly facilitated a media company named Forum World Features (FWF) ‘to arrange for special coverage of the Chilean situation before and after the Congressional vote on Allende for the Presidency on 24 October’. FWF, however, was not a conventional media company. It had been set up in London in 1958 by intelligence operative Brian Crozier with CIA funding and, according to a leaked CIA document, ‘with the knowledge and cooperation of British intelligence’. In October 1970, Crozier requested assistance from the British embassy in Santiago for the production of a series of ‘behind the scenes’ articles on ‘the introduction of the UP programme’. Later the same month, British Foreign Secretary Alec Douglas-Home
told IRD specialist Dyer to ‘respond to any approach’ from FWF’s Latin American editor Affan Buitrago.\textsuperscript{124} Douglas-Home’s intervention is the main evidence that IRD work on Chile was being monitored and directed at the highest levels of British government.

FWF played a significant role in the propaganda onslaught against Allende. In December 1973, FWF journalist Robert Moss published \textit{Chile’s Marxist Experiment}—a CIA-commissioned book which categorically rejected the US role in the coup, and laid the blame at the feet of Allende’s economic policy.\textsuperscript{125} As Moss wrote, ‘In the demonology of the left, Latin-American coups are by definition the work of the CIA, working in collusion with sinister right-wing camarillas devoid of popular backing. But the coup in Chile was not an everyday Latin-American putsch. The armed forces did not move in a political vacuum. And their decision to intervene had nothing to do with Washington’.\textsuperscript{126} The responsibility for ‘the death of democracy’ in Chile, Moss continued, ‘lies with Dr Allende and his fellow-Marxists’.\textsuperscript{127} Crozier later wrote that the book achieved its intended effect in that it ‘played its part in the necessary destabilisation of the Allende regime’.\textsuperscript{128}

As the Guardian reported in 1976, moreover, ten thousand copies of Moss’ book were purchased by the Pinochet regime ‘to be given away as part of a propaganda package’.\textsuperscript{129} The same year, academics in the US had become ‘bewildered’ after receiving unsolicited ‘as many as three copies of the book’.\textsuperscript{130} Given British intelligence was aware of FWF’s sources of funding, it seems unlikely that Foreign Office planners knew nothing of the nature of its operations in Chile. Indeed, in December 1973, Latin American Department official Hugh Carless boasted that ‘Robert Moss’ book [. . . has] helped us to strike a balance’ on Chile.\textsuperscript{131} Crozier, meanwhile, would go on to spend ‘several days closeted with the dictator, General Augusto Pinochet’, for whom he ‘drafted (in Spanish) fifteen clauses for a new Constitution’.\textsuperscript{132} Only one was left out of the final version.

\textbf{After the rubble}

British propaganda efforts did not end with the coup of 1973. The focus of information activity, however, appeared to shift towards normalising and consolidating the new regime by influencing the reporting of critical British journalists in Chile. ‘Since 11 September’, reads a 1973 Foreign Office report, ‘Santiago has been inundated with British journalists. These have included several television teams’.\textsuperscript{133} One of those teams was BBC Panorama, who had ‘made early contact with the embassy’ and were accompanied during their visit by British information officer Tony Walter.\textsuperscript{134} Embassy officials noted that the Panorama crew had ‘worked hard and seen a lot’.\textsuperscript{135} Among the scenes witnessed by the television crew was Dawson Island, ‘where most of the senior political prisoners [in Chile] are detained’; many were later tortured.\textsuperscript{136} At the prison camp, the crew witnessed ‘a strange and intensely disturbing ceremony’ which was ‘reminiscent of a film set for a Prisoner of War camp in a B movie’.\textsuperscript{137} Upon seeing this, Walter privately noted that his hands trembled.\textsuperscript{138}

Despite such disturbing scenes, Walter informed the IRD that Panorama producers Bill Cran and Julia Pettifer had ‘been extremely conscientious’ and the documentary should therefore ‘be about 60 to 75% favourable to the new regime’.\textsuperscript{139} In December, C.D. Crabbie of the Latin American Department agreed that ‘this was a good programme and must have helped a great deal to put the Chilean problem in better perspective for the man-in-the-street’.\textsuperscript{140} Douglas-Home agreed, noting that ‘the BBC’s Panorama
programme on Chile last night was a well-balanced and documented piece relatively favourable to the military takeover.141 The Chilean military was similarly satisfied with the BBC’s reporting on the post-coup atmosphere. In November 1973, Walter wrote that he had ‘received no complaints from the Chilean authorities about the BBC’s handling of coup news’.142

While the British state broadcaster’s coverage was deemed satisfactory, information officers privately complained about ‘wolffish propaganda lurking in the sheepish guise of journalism’ which was ‘reaching the British public about Chile’ through the Guardian and the Financial Times.143 To be sure, officials in the Latin American Department privately conceded that ‘a good deal of fact’ lay ‘behind the atrocity stories and that alone makes it impossible for us to counter the propaganda’.144 From the embassy in Santiago, British planners nonetheless sought to rein in the deluge of antagonistic coverage. In November 1973, Walter complained that ‘there has been some private mutterings to me about the reports of Richard Gott and Hugh O’Shaughnessey—but no public recriminations’.145 In a revealing passage, Walter noted that ‘it would be comforting to believe that the hours of Embassy briefings and the gin and tonics on the patio have achieved the desired steadying effect’.146 An important function of information officers based in Santiago, in other words, was to pacify journalists who appeared hostile to the incoming junta.

The IRD did not only target influential figures situated in Chile. On 16 September 1973, just five days after the coup, journalist Mark Roden published an article in the Sunday Telegraph, arguing that ‘there is no firm evidence to suggest the Americans inspired the fall of President Allende’ while ‘Fidel Castro of Cuba virtually controlled security in Allende’s Cuba’.147 The same day, a letter signed by D.L.W. Ashton was sent to Roden, noting ‘I read with interest your article on the Castro-Cuban infiltration into Chile, especially in the security service and paramilitary groups’.148 Ashton continued that ‘I want to know if during the Allende period, particularly just before the military coup, there were any or many anti-Marxists imprisoned for political reasons, by the Allende authorities’.149 Curiously, Ashton’s letter arrived on 20 September at the desk of British information officer Graeme L. Horwood, who prepared a detailed response for IRD official J. Welser. ‘There have been no known instances of any peaceful political opponent of Allende being imprisoned’, wrote Horwood, ‘mistreatment was mild’, and ‘the Allende regime was not totalitarian (in that it was freely elected and permitted an opposition press)’.150 As with other contentious areas of British foreign policy, it seems plausible that the IRD had a discrete hand in the production of news articles on the Chilean coup.151

At the same time, documents obtained under the Freedom of Information Act demonstrate that the IRD was gathering intelligence on the UK-based Chile Solidarity Campaign (CSC). The CSC was one of Britain’s most effective Latin America-related solidarity campaigns, which applied pressure on the British government until Pinochet was forced to step down in 1990.152 Though many of IRD’s documents on the CSC have been destroyed, at least one file has been retained.153 This file, signed by IRD official Michael Hickson and addressed to a number of senior IRD officials including Allott, demonstrates how the IRD gathered intelligence on the CSC and tracked its activities. On 7 December 1973, Hickson delivered his ‘memorandum on the composition and activities of the various groups in Britain and abroad involved in the international campaign for “solidarity” with supporters of the former Allende government in Chile’.154 In the memorandum, Hickson lists the British political figures and trade union movements associated with CSC, noting with
concern that “material” assistance to opponents of the Junta has also been openly recommended.\textsuperscript{155} Hickson also establishes a list of cities with a high concentration of Chilean exiles, whom he considered susceptible to joining solidarity movements.\textsuperscript{156} The IRD’s monitoring of the CSC represents a rare case of covert British intelligence gathering on Latin American solidarity organisations.

**Conclusion**

The Chilean coup of 1973 was thus not only a far-away issue for British planners, but an issue of considerable domestic concern. To be sure, IRD operations were foremost directed towards preventing an Allende victory during the 1960s, demonstrating that Britain did not simply react to the coup but played an active—though likely not decisive—role in fomenting the destabilisation of Chilean democracy. Britain’s engagement in this process, moreover, suggests that British planners viewed Latin America with greater strategic concern than was previously thought. Though business interests remained central to British foreign policy in the region during this period, it is important to reemphasise how ‘checking a Communist takeover’ was seen by the IRD as ‘at least as important a British national interest as negotiating trading and stepping up imports’.\textsuperscript{157} Indeed, these concerns were subtly reaffirmed by Secondé on 1 October 1973, when he wrote to Douglas-Home that ‘there was a danger that a successful outcome to the Chilean experiment would have repercussions beyond Latin America by offering a pattern to be followed in other countries, particularly France and Italy’.\textsuperscript{158} In order to prevent Allende’s social programme, as well as to gain currency within the ‘special relationship’ with the US, Britain provided considerable assistance to Washington’s now-infamous propaganda campaign in Chile. The IRD’s attempts to contain domestic dissent about British support for Pinochet, moreover, were not insignificant, demonstrating how foreign and domestic policy were neatly intertwined. In this light, Thatcher’s announcement that Pinochet was a ‘staunch, true friend’ of Britain would now appear to carry even greater weight.\textsuperscript{159}

**Notes**

1. Grace Livingstone, *Britain and the Dictatorships*, 1–57.
2. ‘Tony Blair’s speech in full’, *BBC News*, 28 September 1999, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/460009.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/460009.stm); and “Brutal” Pinochet faces long wait,” *BBC News*, 18 October 1998, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/196249.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/196249.stm).
3. Livingstone, *Britain and the Dictatorships*, 18.
4. Ibid., 1–19.
5. “Speech by Lady Thatcher to a Meeting in Blackpool Organised by the Chilean Reconciliation Movement,” Margaret Thatcher Foundation, 6 October 1999, [https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/108383](https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/108383).
6. See Lashmar and Oliver, *Britain’s Secret Propaganda War*; Rory Cormac, “The Information Research Department,” 1074–1104; Defty, *Britain, America and Anti-Communist Propaganda 1945–53*; Wilford, “The Information Research Department,” 353–369; McGarr, “The Information Research Department,” 130–156.
7. Future Foreign Publicity Policy, 4 January 1948, CAB 129/23/8, UK National Archives, Kew.
8. In recent years, research has emerged about Brazilian support for and Cuban opposition to the coup; see Simon, *O Brasil contra a democracia*; Harmer, *Allende’s Chile and the Inter-American Cold War. See also* Devine, “What Really Happened in Chile,” 26–35; Kornbluh, “The
El Mercurio file: secret documents shine,” 14–28; Blum, Killing Hope, 207–217; Qureshi, Nixon, Kissinger, and Allende; US Senate, “Staff Report of the Select Committee,” 1975, https://www.intelligence.senate.gov/sites/default/files/94chile.pdf; and Kornbluh, “U.S. Covert Intervention in Chile,” NSAEB, 23 May 2014, https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB470/.

9. Monroe, “The Monroe Doctrine,” 2 December 1823; Martin, “Britain’s cultural relations with Latin America.”

10. See Livingstone, Britain and the Dictatorships; Grace Livingstone, “Uncovering Britain’s secret role in protecting Chile’s 1973 coup,” https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/sep/11/chile-1973-coup-britain-protecting; Livingstone, “Torture 'for your amusement',' https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2020-04-21-torture-for-your-amusement-how-thatchers-government-misled-mps-and-public-about-its-dealings-with-the-pinochet-regime/; Beckett, Pinochet in Piccadilly; Curtis, Unpeople, 2004.

11. Ibid.

12. Livingstone, Britain and the Dictatorships.

13. See Lashmar and Oliver, Britain’s Secret Propaganda War,1998); Cormac, “The Information Research Department,” 1074–1104; Defty, Britain, America and Anti-Communist Propaganda; Wilford, “The Information Research Department,” 353–369; and McGarr, “The Information Research Department,” 130–156.

14. Cantarino, Segredos da Propaganda Anticomunista; and Cormac, “The currency of covert action.”

15. Ibid.

16. Lockhart, “International Cooperation During the Cold War,” 181–202.

17. See Livingstone, Britain and the Dictatorships; Martins Filho, Segredos de estado: o governo britânico e a tortura no Brasil; McEvoy, “The Trade Goes, and the Flag Follows?” 866–890; Rabe, U.S. Intervention in British Guiana; Hull, British Diplomacy and US Hegemony in Cuba; Sewell, “We need not be ashamed of our own economic profit motive,” 607–630; Treharne, and Thatcher’s, Special Relationship; and Mills and Miller, Britain and the Growth of US Hegemony.

18. See Kornbluh, “Agency Tries to Hide Knowledge of 9/11/73 Coup Plotting,” National Security Archive, 9 September 2016, https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/briefing-book/chile/2016-09-09/cia-cover-chile; US Senate, “Staff Report of the Select Committee,” https://www.intelligence.senate.gov/sites/default/files/94chile.pdf.

19. Summary of political situation in Brazil and use made of IRD material there, 1949, FO 1110/182, UK National Archives, Kew.

20. Comments from posts and requests for more material, 1948, FO 1110/26, UK National Archives, Kew.

21. Despatch from Caracas, 19 March 1948, FO 1110/5, UK National Archives, Kew.

22. See note 19 above.

23. Report of newly appointed IRD officer, Brazil, 1963, FO 1110/1623, UK National Archives, Kew.

24. Report: IRD work in Brazil, IRD, 1964/65, FO 1110/1747, UK National Archives, Kew.

25. Miss Allott to E.S. Dyer, IRD: Chile: Press, News, Publication, 20 February 1969, FCO 168/3562, UK National Archives, Kew, point 4.

26. RJD Evans to JE Jackson Esq, Report: IRD work in Brazil, IRD, 17 June 1964, FO 1110/1747, UK National Archives, Kew.

27. See Saunders, Who Paid the Piper?.

28. Committee of Officials to Consider Overseas Information Services, 24 July 1952, CAB 129/54/9, point 35, United Kingdom National Archives, Kew.

29. Ibid.

30. Anderson, “Lorraine Hansberry’s Freedom Family,” 259–269.

31. See note 28 above.

32. See Shaw, “Some writers are more equal than others”: Orwell, “The state and cold war privilege,” 143–170.
33. Cartoons—IRD, Animal Farm Strip Cartoon, List of papers, 19 December 1958, FO 1110/1238, UK National Archives, Kew.
34. R.J.D. Evans to W.A. Wellington, Report: IRD work in Brazil, 5 August 1964, FO 1110/1747, UK National Archives, Kew.
35. See note 23 above.
36. Ibid.
37. N.D Clive to Peck, RNS/ME/LA—Reuters—BBC, 1 November 1968, FCO 168/3419, point 6, UK National Archives, Kew.
38. Ibid.
39. Ibid., C.J. Curran: BBC Lunchtime Lecture, point 17.
40. Ibid., Agreed record: Meeting between Reuters and FCO, 18 November 1968.
41. Centre for Research and Documentation of Contemporary History of Brazil, “The press and its role in the fall of João Goulart,” CPDOC, accessed 10 September 2020, https://cpdoc.fgv.br/producao/dossies/Jango/artigos/NaPresidenciaRepublica/A_impressa_e_seu_papel_na_queda_de_Goulart.
42. Leslie Fry to LC Glass, IRD: Activities in Brazil, 12 October 1964, FO 1110/1747, UK National Archives, Kew.
43. Brief for call by Sir David Hunt, IRD Work Brazil, 3 September 1969, FCO 168/3560, UK National Archives, Kew.
44. Ibid.
45. Overseas Information Services: The Drogheda Report, 17 November 1953, CAB 129/64/21, point 65, UK National Archives, Kew.
46. Ibid., point 7.
47. Committee for review of Overseas Information Services, 18 June 1957, CAB 129/87/41, UK National Archives, Kew, 30.
48. Latin America: ‘The Economist’ regional edition, FCO 95/294, UK National Archives, Kew.
49. IRD Objectives, Targets, Outlets and Themes, Annual Information Reports from Latin America, 21 January 1964, FO 1110/1818, UK National Archives, Kew.
50. Ibid.
51. Ibid.
52. E.R. Allott to Mr Crook, IRD work in Chile, 13 July 1970, FCO 168/4015, point 4, UK National Archives, Kew.
53. Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, British Policy Towards Latin America, 10 June 1966, CAB 129/125, UK National Archives, Kew.
54. Ibid., point 12.
55. Ibid.
56. Ibid.
57. Allende, “Discurso en los Balcones de la Febh,” 4 September 1970, in Palabra de Presidente, audio recording.
58. Ibid.
59. “The Popular Unity’s Programme,” The Róbinson Rojas Archive, accessed 2 September 2020, https://www.rojasdatabank.info/programm.htm.
60. “Salvador Allende 1970 Victory Speech,” Marxists.org; and Goldberg, “The Politics of the Allende Overthrow in Chile,” 93–116.
61. Ibid.
62. Joint Intelligence Committee, Chile: Economic prospects, 3 September 1971, CAB 188/17, UK National Archives, Kew; Joint Intelligence Committee, The Chilean economy: Allende takes charge, 10 February 1971, CAB 188/15, UK National Archives, Kew.
63. See D’Abernon, ‘The Economic Mission to South America’; Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, British Policy Towards Latin America, 10 June 1966, CAB 129/125, UK National Archives, Kew.
64. Alec Douglas-Home to embassies, 13 September, FCO 7/2411, in markcurtis.info, last accessed 2 September 2020, http://markcurtis.info/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Declassified.Chile-1973.pdf.
65. Ibid., Reginald Secondé to Alec Douglas-Home, 1 October 1973.
66. Ibid., Reginald Secondé to Hankey, FCO, 19 September 1973.
67. Mark Curtis, Unpeople, 184.
68. Livingstone, Britain and the Dictatorships, 1–17.
69. FCO brief to Sec of State for meeting with Mr Callaghan, 19 September 1973, FCO 7/2412, in markcurtis.info, last accessed 2 September 2020, http://markcurtis.info/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Declassified.Chile-1973.pdf.
70. McWilliam, SPA in Chile, 24 September 1962, FCO 168/674; Report by Miss E.R. Allott: IRD Field Officer in Santiago, IRD: Chile, 10 September 1964, FCO 168/1102, point 7, UK National Archives, Kew.
71. Ibid., point 8.
72. see note 46 above.
73. Ibid; McWilliam, SPA in Chile, 24 September 1962, FCO 168/674.
74. Ibid.
75. Report by Miss E.R. Allott: IRD Field Officer in Santiago, IRD: Chile, 10 September 1964, FCO 168/1102, point 7, UK National Archives, Kew.
76. See Alan Angell, “Chile since 1958,” 129–202.
77. Report by Ms E.R. Allott: IRD Field Officer in Santiago, IRD: Chile, 10 September 1964, FCO 168/1102, point 9, UK National Archives, Kew.
78. McWilliam, SPA in Chile, 24 September 1962, FCO168/674.
79. see note 77 above.
80. Ibid., point f.
81. Ibid.
82. Ibid., Letter: L.C. Glass to Sir David Scott Fox, 24 September 1964, point e.
83. Ibid., Report by Ms E.R. Allott: IRD Field Officer in Santiago, 10 September 1964, point i.
84. Ibid., point 10.
85. Ibid.
86. Ibid., L.C. Glass to David Scott Fox, 26 November 1964.
87. IRD Country assessment sheet, Chile, 1969, FCO 168/3561, UK National Archives, Kew.
88. Ibid.
89. E.R. Allott to Mr Crook, IRD work in Chile, 13 July 1970, FCO 168/4015, point 1, UK National Archives, Kew.
90. Ibid., point 4.
91. CPUSTAL, 1969, FCO 168/3557, UK National Archives, Kew.
92. Ibid., From Redacted to Ms. Allott, 15 July 1969.
93. Ibid.
94. Ibid., point 6.
95. See Livingstone, Britain and the Dictatorships, 1–50.
96. Sir David Hunt to Sir Edward Peck, Brasilia—Ideal Establishment, 16 June 1970, FCO 79/224, point 4, UK National Archives, Kew.
97. R.A. Wellington to Miss Allott, IRD Work: Brazil, 13 May 1969, FCO 95/491, UK National Archives, Kew.
98. See note 43 above.
99. Ibid. Old Sarum was a British military base situated in Wiltshire, UK, which became the Joint Warfare Establishment in 1963. The base provided extensive training in covert operations and psychological warfare.
100. See Emily Buchanan, “How the UK taught Brazil’s dictators interrogation techniques,” BBC, 30 May 2014; Ian Cobain, Cruel Britannia: A Secret History of Torture (London: Portobello Books, 2013).
101. See note 53 above.
102. Ibid., point 9.
103. Central Intelligence Agency, “CIA Activities in Chile,” 18 September 2000, in CIA.gov, last accessed 2 September 2020, https://www.cia.gov/library/reports/general-reports-1/chile/.
104. Kornbluh, “The El Mercurio file.”
105. See note 103 above.
106. Peter Kornbluh, “Nixon on Chile Intervention,” National Security Archive Electronic Briefing Book, last accessed 2 September 2020, https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB110/.
107. Ibid; IRD Country assessment sheet, Chile, 1969, FCO 168/3561, UK National Archives, Kew.
108. A.S. Dyer to Miss Allott, IRD: Chile: Press, News, Publication, 4 February 1969, FCO 168/3562, UK National Archives, Kew.
109. Ibid.
110. Ibid., C.G. Morris to Miss Allott, 11 February 1969.
111. Ibid.
112. Ibid., A.S. Dyer to Miss Allott, 4 February 1969.
113. Ibid., C.G. Morris to Miss Allott, 11 February 1969.
114. Ibid.
115. Ibid point 5.
116. Ibid., point 2.
117. See Lashmar and Oliver, Britain’s Secret Propaganda War, ch. 1; Defty, Britain, America and Anti-Communist Propaganda 1945–53; and Wilford, “The Information Research Department: Britain’s secret Cold War weapon revealed.”
118. James M. Murphy to J.G. McGinnies, IRD: World Labour Assembly, 20 March 1973, FCO 168/5229, UK National Archives, Kew.
119. Ibid.
120. Ibid.
121. H.H. Tucker to Miss Allott, Forum World Features—Coverage of the Chilean Situation, October 1970, FCO 168/4299, UK National Archives, Kew.
122. Philip Agee, Dirty Work: The CIA in Western Europe (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1978), 206.
123. See note 121 above.
124. Ibid., Alec Douglas-Home to Embassy Santiago, 28 October 1970.
125. Robert Moss, Chile’s Marxist experiment.
126. Ibid., ii.
127. Ibid., iv.
128. Crozier, Free Agent, 111.
129. Peter Chippindale and Martin Walker, “Tory’s book funded by CIA,” Guardian, 20 December 1976.
130. Chippindale and Walker, “Only the views you want to read,” Guardian, 20 December 1976.
131. Hugh Carless to Reginald Secondé, Chile: Political Internal, 28 December 1973, FCO 7/2416, UK National Archives, Kew.
132. Crozier, Free Agent, 157.
133. Chile: Information Policy Report by Anthony Walter, 27 November 1973, FCO 26/1360, point 4, UK National Archives, Kew.
134. Anthony Walter to A.E. Clarke Esq, Chile: Political Internal, 22 November 1973, FCO 7/2416, UK National Archives, Kew.
135. Ibid., Reginald Secondé to H.M. Carless, 14 November 1973.
136. See Ruz, “Dawson Island torture victims fight for compensation in Chile,” BBC, 25 November 2014.
137. Cited in Reginald Secondé to H.M. Carless, Chile: Political Internal, 14 November 1973, FCO 7/2416, UK National Archives, Kew.
138. Ibid.
139. Ibid., Anthony Walter to A.E. Clarke Esq, 22 November 1973.
140. Ibid., C.D. Crabbie to A.J. McWalter, Panorama and World in Action about Chile, 14 December 1973.
141. Ibid., Alec Douglas-Home to Santiago, undated.
142. Information Policy Report from Chile, November 1973, FCO 26/1360, UK National Archives, Kew.
143. See note 131 above.
144. Ibid.
145. Information Policy Report from Chile, November 1973, FCO 26/1360, point 24, UK National Archives, Kew.
146. Ibid.
147. Mark Roden, “How Castro made Chile his base,” Sunday Telegraph, 16 September 1973.
148. Graeme L. Horwood to Mr Wesler, 20 September 1973, “Allende’s Attitude to Anti-Marxists,” FCO 168/5059, UK National Archives, Kew.
149. Ibid.
150. Ibid.
151. See Lashmar and Oliver, Britain’s Secret Propaganda War.
152. See Livingstone, Britain and the Dictatorships.
153. Freedom of Information Requests received by the author on 12 October and 20 November 2020, FOI2020/16907 and FOI2020/21449.
154. Ibid.
155. Ibid.
156. Ibid.
157. See note 49 above.
158. Reginald Secondé to Alec Douglas-Home, Internal political situation in Chile, 1 October 1973, FCO 7/2414, UK National Archives, Kew.
159. See note 5 above.

Acknowledgements

I would like to extend my appreciation to Dr Marieke Riethof, Geraldo Cantarino, Josh Watts, Pablo Navarrete, John Booth, Robin Ramsay, and Nathalia Urban for their advice during this project. A special thanks is due to Dr Andrew Redden of the University of Liverpool for his continued help, patience, and encouragement over recent years. It is enormously appreciated.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Funding

This research was supported by the Economic, Social and Research Council ESRC [n/a].

Notes on contributor

Kevin John McEvoy is a PhD researcher and journalist whose work focuses on British foreign policy in Latin America in the post-Second World War period.

Bibliography

“‘Brutal’ Pinochet Faces Long Wait”. BBC News, 18 October 1998. http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/196249.stm.
Agee, P. Dirty Work: The CIA in Western Europe. New York: Barnes & Noble, 1978.
Allende, S. “Discurso en los Balcones de la Fech: Primer Extracto/Segundo Extracto”. Palabra de Presidente, 4 September 1970. audio recording.
Anderson, M. “Lorraine Hansberry’s Freedom Family.” American Communist History 7, no. 2 (2008): 259–269. doi:10.1080/14743890802580131.
Angell, A. “Chile since 1958.” In Chile Since Independence, edited by L. Bethell, 129–202. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.

Beckett, A. Pinochet in Piccadilly: Britain and Chile’s Hidden History. London: Faber & Faber, 2003.

Blum, W. Killing Hope: US Military & CIA Interventions since World War II. London: Zed Books, 2004.

Buchanan, E. “How the UK Taught Brazil’s Dictators Interrogation Techniques”. BBC News, 30 May 2014.

Cabinet Office (CAB) files: 129/23; 129/54; 129/64; 129/87; 129/125; 188/15; 188/17.

Cantarino, G. Segredos Da Propaganda Anticomunista: Documentos Diplomáticos Revelam a Atuacao Do IRD, Um Departamento Secreto Do Governo Britanico, No Brasil. Sao Paulo: Mauad, 2010.

Central Intelligence Agency. “CIA Activities in Chile”. CIA.gov. 18 September 2000, Accessed 2 September 2020. https://www.cia.gov/library/reports/general-reports-1/chile/

Centre for Research and Documentation of Contemporary History of Brazil. “The Press and Its Role in the Fall of João Goulart”. CPDOC, accessed 10 September 2020. https://cpdoc.fgv.br/producao/dossies/Jango/artigos/NaPresidenciaRepublica/A_imprensa_e_seu_papel_na_queda_de_Goulart

Chippindale, P., and M. Walker. “Only the Views You Want to Read”. Guardian, 20 December 1976.

Chippindale, P., and M. Walker. “Tory’s Book Funded by CIA”. Guardian, 20 December 1976.

Cobain, I. Cruel Britannia: A Secret History of Torture. London: Portobello Books, 2013.

Cormac, R. “The Information Research Department, Unattributable Propaganda, and Northern Ireland, 1971-1973: Promising Salvation but Ending in Failure?” English Historical View 131, no. 552 (2016): 1074–1104. doi:10.1093/ehr/cew342.

Cormac, R. “The Currency of Covert Action: British Special Political Action in Latin America, 1961-64.” Journal of Strategic Studies (2020): 1–25. doi:10.1080/01402390.2020.1852937.

Curtis, M. Unpeople: Britain’s Secret Human Rights Abuses. London: Vintage, 2004.

D’Abernon, V. “The Economic Mission to South America.” Journal of the Royal Institute of International Affairs 8, no. 6, November (1929): 568–582. doi:10.2307/3015674.

Defy, A. Britain, America and Anti-Communist Propaganda 1945-53. London: Routledge, 2007.

Devine, J. “What Really Happened in Chile: The CIA, the Coup against Allende, and the Rise of Pinochet.” Foreign Affairs 93, no. 4 (July/August 2014): 26–35.

Filho, M., and J. Roberto. Segredos De Estado: O Governo Britanico E a Tortura No Brasil. Brasilia: Prisms, 2017.

Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) files: 7/2411; 7/2412; 7/2414; 7/2416; 26/1360; 79/224; 95/294; 168/401; 95/491; 168/674; 168/1102; 168/3419; 168/3561; 168/3562; 168/3557; 168/3560; 168/4299; 168/5059; 168/5229.

Foreign Office (FO) files: 1110/5; 1110/26; 1110/182; 1110/1238; 1110/1623; 1110/1747; 1110/1818.

Freedom of Information Requests received by the author on 12 October and 20 November 2020, FOI2020/16907 and FOI2020/21449.

Goldberg, P. A. “The Politics of the Allende Overthrow in Chile.” Political Science Quarterly 90, no. 1 (1965): 93–116. doi:10.2307/2148700.

Harmer, T. Allende’s Chile and the Inter-American Cold War. North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 2011.

Hull, C. British Diplomacy and US Hegemony in Cuba, 1989-1964. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.

Kornbluh, P. “Nixon on Chile Intervention: White House Tape Acknowledges Instructions to Block Salvador Allende.” National Security Archive Electronic Briefing Book. Accessed 2 September 2020. https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB110/

Kornbluh, P. “The El Mercurio File: Secret Documents Shine New Light on How the CIA Used a Newspaper to Foment a Coup.” Columbia Journalism Review 42, no. 3 (2003): 14–28. September-October.

Kornbluh, P. 2014. “U.S. Covert Intervention in Chile: Planning to Block Allende Began Long before September 1970 Election.” NSArchive 23 May. https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB470/
Kornbluh, P. 2016. “Agency Tries to Hide Knowledge of 9/11/73 Coup Plotting.” National Security Archive 9 September. https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/briefing-book/chile/2016-09-09/cia-cover-chile

Lashmar, P., and J. Oliver. Britain’s Secret Propaganda War: Foreign Office and the Cold War, 1948-77. Sutton: Sutton Publishing Ltd, 1998.

Livingstone, G. “Uncovering Britain’s Secret Role in Protecting Chile’s 1973 Coup.” Guardian. 11 September 2013.

Livingstone, G. Britain and the Dictatorships of Argentina and Chile, 1973-82: Foreign Policy, Corporations and Social Movements. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018.

Livingstone, G. 2020. “Torture ‘For Your Amusement’: How Thatcher’s Government Misled MPs and Public about Its Dealings with the Pinochet Regime.” Declassified UK 21 April. https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2020-04-21-torture-for-your-amusement-how-thatchers-government-misled-mps-and-public-about-its-dealings-with-the-pinochet-regime/

Lockhart, J. “International Cooperation during the Cold War: British Interest in Chile’s Early Nuclear History, 1955-1970.” In Britain and the Growth of US Hegemony in Twentieth-Century Latin America, edited by C. M. Thomas and R. M. Miller, 181–202. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020.

Martin, G. “Britain’s Cultural Relations with Latin America.” In Britain and Latin America: A Changing Relationship, edited by V. Bulmer-Thomas, 27–51. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.

McEvoy, K. J. “The Trade Goes, and the Flag Follows? British State Intervention and Natural Resource Extraction in Colombia.” The International History Review 41, no. 4 (2019): 866–890. doi:10.1080/07075332.2018.1466347.

McGarr, P. M. “The Information Research Department, British Covert Propaganda, and the Sino-Indian War of 1962: Combating Communism and Courting Failure?”. The International History Review 41, no. 1 (2019): 130–156. doi:10.1080/07075332.2017.1402070.

Monroe, J. “The Monroe Doctrine: President Monroe’s Message at the Commencement of the First Session of the Eighteenth Congress.” December 2, 1823. Presidential Messages of the 18th Congress, Record Group 46. Records of the United States Senate, 1789-1990. National Archives.

Moss, R. Chile’s Marxist Experiment. London: David & Charles, 1973.

“The Popular Unity’s Programme: Programme Presented to the Chilean People for the Presidential Election Campaign in 1970”. The Róbinson Rojas Archive, Accessed 2 September 2020. https://www.rojasdatabank.info/programm.htm

Qureshi, L. Z. Nixon, Kissinger, and Allende: U.S. Involvement in the 1973 Coup in Chile. New York: Lexington Books, 2009.

Rabe, S. G. U.S. Intervention in British Guiana: A Cold War Story. North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 2006.

Roden, M. “How Castro Made Chile His Base”. Sunday Telegraph, 16 September 1973.

Ruz, C. “Dawson Island Torture Victims Fight for Compensation in Chile”. BBC News, 25 November 2014.

Saunders, F. S. Who Paid the Piper?: The CIA and the Cultural Cold War. New York: Granta, 2000.

Senate, U. S. “Staff Report of the Select Committee: Covert Action in Chile, 1963-1973”. U.S. Government Printing Office, 1975. https://www.intelligence.senate.gov/sites/default/files/94chile.pdf.

Sewell, B. “‘We Need Not Be Ashamed of Our Own Economic Profit Motive’: Britain, Latin America, and the Alliance for Progress, 1959-63.” International History Review 37, no. 3 (2014): 607–630. doi:10.1080/07075332.2014.940995.

Shaw, T. “‘Some Writers are More Equal than Others’: George Orwell, the State and Cold War Privilege.” Cold War History 4, no. 1 (2003): 143–170. doi:10.1080/14682740312331391774.

Simon, R. O Brasil Contra A Democracia. A Ditadura O Golpe No Chile E A Guerra Fria Na America Do Sul. Brasilia: Companhia Das Letras, 2019.

“Speech by Lady Thatcher to a Meeting in Blackpool Organised by the Chilean Reconciliation Movement”. Margaret Thatcher Foundation, 6 October 1999. https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/108383

“Tony Blair’s Speech in Full”. BBC News, 28 September 1999. http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/460009.stm
Treharne, S.-A. *Reagan and Thatcher’s Special Relationship: Latin America and Anglo-American Relations*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015.

Wilford, H. “The Information Research Department: Britain’s Secret Cold War Weapon Revealed.” *Review of International Studies* 24, no. 3, July (1998): 353–369. doi:10.1017/S0260210598003532.