



Language

Chile had, unlike many of its neighbours, an enviable record of civilian government. But the popular election of the Marxist President Salvador Allende in 1970 polarized the country. Whilst some left wing groups agitated for more rapid moves towards socialism, right wing parties, much of the middle class mobilized to oppose moves towards nationalization. Although unrest was promoted by the military and rich elite, and many on the left argue that the USA used economic pressure to destabilize the regime, the lorry drivers' strikes of 1972 and 1973, supported by significant sections of the population, did reflect popular opposition and the protesters used some tactics also adopted by resisters to military regimes. But the military then intervened directly and brutally to overthrow Allende in a coup, attacking the presidential palace, and initiating a massacre of known leftists and supporters of Allende. US (CIA) involvement in the coup has been well documented.

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