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## REMEMBERING PINOCHET'S CHILE

On the Eve of London 1998

by Steve J. Stern

In 1998, General Augusto Pinochet was arrested in London on charges of crimes against humanity. All over the world, but especially in Chile, the shocking arrest thrust the former dictator and the atrocities of his regime back into the public eye. And this August, after six years of legal wrangling, Chile's Supreme Court stripped Pinochet of his immunity from prosecution on charges of human rights crimes, raising the hopes of victims that he might finally be brought to trial.

During the two years just prior to the 1998 arrest, the renowned historian Steve J. Stern had been in Chile collecting oral histories of life under Pinochet as part an investigation into the form and meaning of memories of state-sponsored atrocities. In this compelling work, Stern shares the recollections of individual Chileans and draws on their stories to provide a framework for understanding memory struggles in history. At once analytical, poignant, and personal, *Remembering Pinochet's Chile* offers a human portrait of Chile's memory drama on the eve of the London arrest.

From a woman who recalls Pinochet's overthrow of Salvador Allende as salvation from scarcity and chaos to an activist whose husband was tortured by state agents, and from a colonel who served under Pinochet to a mother who had two sons "disappeared," these stories reveal how people connected their intimate personal memories with the collective memory of traumatic times. They draw the reader into a passionate quest to shape the remembered meaning of trauma and state atrocity and, ultimately, to control the politics of truth and justice. *Remembering Pinochet's Chile* not only presents a rounded portrait of Chile's specific memory drama but also a method for tracing the historical unfolding of memory struggles in other societies (such as Iraq) that must reckon with experiences of mass violence and crimes against humanity.

*Remembering Pinochet's Chile* is the first volume in *The Memory Box of Pinochet's Chile, A Trilogy*. Subsequent volumes will trace the historical unfolding of Chile's memory drama from the 1973 coup into the twenty-first century.

Steve J. Stern is Chair of the Department of History at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. He is the editor of *Shining and Other Paths: War and Society in Peru, 1980–1995* (also published by Duke University Press), and author of *The Secret History of Gender: Women, Men, and Power in Late Colonial Mexico* and *Peru's Indian Peoples and the Challenge of Spanish Conquest*. He is a coauthor of *Resistance, Rebellion, and Consciousness in the Andean Peasant World, Eighteenth to Twentieth Centuries*.