

9-11-70

Chile

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

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TO : ARA/LA - Mr. Crimmins

DATE: September 11, 1970

FROM : ARA/LA - George Lister

SUBJECT: Was the Allende Victory Unique?

The Chilean voting results have prompted quite a few loosely phrased comments to the effect that this is the first time the Communists, or Marxists, etc., have won a free election, or stand to come to power through the democratic process. At least some of these comments may be a little misleading.

For example, the French parliamentary elections of April-May, 1936 gave the Popular Front (Socialists, Communists and Radical Socialists) a large majority, and a Popular Front government was formed under Leon Blum. The Socialists and Radical Socialists participated in the cabinet, which was supported by the Communists. Blum had a hard time obtaining Senate approval for his programs, was overwhelmed by domestic and foreign problems, and fell in June, 1937. A second Popular Front ministry was formed in March, 1938, but went out in less than a month.

In Spain, the 1931 parliamentary elections were won by the left wing parties. And of course the Popular Front (Republicans, Socialists, Communists, Anarchists) won the February, 1936 elections decisively. The Civil War began in July.

I believe research would reveal a few other comparable leftist genuine electoral successes, but the foregoing are the best known.

ARA/LA:Glistter

Copies to:

ARA - Mr. Meyer
ARA - Mr. Hurwitch
USOAS - Amb. Jova
USOAS - Amb. Henderson
USOAS - Mr. Ford

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