

Tanya Harmer *Beatriz Allende: A Revolutionary Life in Latin America* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press 2020), 384 pgs. \$34.95.

Beatriz Allende's brief life took place during the "revolutionary moment" in Latin America that followed the 1959 Cuban Revolution. Beatriz's father, Salvador Allende, a co-founder of Chile's Socialist Party, was an important figure during those years. But, as Tanya Harmer ably shows in *Beatriz Allende: A Revolutionary Life in Latin America*, Beatriz was a political figure in her own right. Beatriz's politics were far more radical than her father's. Like many young Latin Americans in the 1960s, Beatriz was inspired by Fidel Castro and Che Guevara. Che called for "two, three, many Vietnams" to compel revolutionary change in Latin America. Salvador Allende rejected violent revolution and stood for peaceful change within constitutional means, especially democratic elections. As Harmer explains, Beatriz deferentially modified her own beliefs to back her father in his decades-long attempt to bring socialism to Chile. Had she not been Salvador's daughter, Harmer argues, Beatriz may have overcome Latin American gender norms of the 1960s to join the revolution.

Harmer obtained access to Beatriz's personal correspondence from Beatriz's second husband, Luis Fernandez Oña, who long survived his wife. Luis was an agent in Cuban intelligence who met Beatriz in the 1960s. He served as a link between Castro's Cuba and Chile's left-wing politicians. Harmer relies repeatedly on Beatriz's correspondence and hours of interviews with Luis to tell Beatriz's story as daughter, student, physician, wife, activist, revolutionary and mother. The different roles Beatriz played during her lifetime constantly conflicted with one another and ultimately led to her suicide at age thirty-five.

As Salvador Allende's daughter, Beatriz had many advantages. She attended college and followed her father into the medical profession. Her experience as a physician treating the poor cemented her devotion to socialism and revolution. She was surrounded by intellectuals such as Chilean poet Pablo Neruda. Raul Castro was once a house guest and she met both Che and Fidel. She travelled widely including to Cuba and Moscow. Respect for her father pushed Beatriz publicly towards a more conventional path than revolution. She and her two younger sisters participated in her father's political campaigns. In 1964 Allende finished second in the presidential election to Christian Democrat Eduardo Frei. Years later the Church Committee would reveal that Frei received covert backing from the CIA (243). Between 1964-1970, while her father was President of the Senate, Beatriz grew into a serious revolutionary. Because she was a woman and the daughter of a well-known politician, she succeeded only partially in obtaining military training in Cuba although Fidel himself gave her an Uzi.

Harmer argues persuasively that stubborn gender norms—obedience to father and husband--that persisted in the experimental, even utopian, atmosphere of the "long 1960s" usurped Beatriz's right to conduct her life as she pleased, which was to be a militant, hands-on revolutionary at war with imperialism and capitalism in the most literal sense. Although she was not allowed to fight, she served the revolution in other ways. She supported the Cuban-backed ELN (*Ejército de Liberación Nacional*) from afar. She helped create "safe houses" in northern Chile, moved supplies and small arms in her jeep, raised money, and used her celebrity and family connections to aid

revolutionists. She helped her father extricate Che's followers from Bolivia after Che was killed.

Salvador Allende was unexpectedly elected Chile's president on his fourth try and overcame CIA-assisted machinations to stop his inauguration in 1970. Beatriz naturally put aside her revolutionary ambitions and joined her father's government. Beatriz served as her father's private secretary and his conduit to more radical, younger political figures. Allende achieved little during his three years in office. He was overthrown on September 11, 1973 in a military coup led by Augusto Pinochet. Beatriz, seven months pregnant, was with her father at the end when he was surrounded by Pinochet's forces. Before taking his own life, he ordered his daughter to escape with Luis to Cuba (207-209). Beatriz obeyed, but only reluctantly. She flew with Luis to Cuba and never returned to Chile.

Beatriz became a leader of the unsuccessful "solidarity" resistance movement against Pinochet. After her father's death, Beatriz addressed a crowd of one million Cubans gathered to honor her father in Havana. Fidel delivered a three-and-one-half-hour eulogy. Beatriz obeyed Fidel who told her to hide her martyred father's suicide and claim, instead, that Pinochet's forces murdered him (217-218). Beatriz lived with Luis in exile in Havana. She travelled extensively to raise money for the resistance. She focused the world's attention on atrocities taking place in Chile. She contributed to a campaign at the United Nations to condemn Pinochet's coup and worked tirelessly to aid hundreds of thousands of Chileans who either fled the country, were arrested and tortured, or were executed or "disappeared."

By 1977 Beatriz was depressed by the failure of the counter-revolution against Pinochet. She split up with Luis. She was unable to resume her career as a physician in Cuba. She was ill-suited to domestic duties. She committed suicide with her Uzi at age thirty-five, leaving two small children behind (261). Luis was blamed for Beatriz's demise and was sent to Angola where, surprisingly, he survived. He eventually returned to Cuba, remarried, and became an important source for Harmer although he died just prior to publication.

Had Beatriz not taken her life in 1977, she would have lived to see the Chilean Left slowly revive beginning in the 1980s although, as Harmer admits, Chile adapted quickly to neo-liberalism and never came close to embracing socialism again. But at least Beatriz would have lived in a Chile where women are more active in politics including Beatriz's daughter, Maya, a member of Chile's Congress (273). Either way, Beatriz's life still would have been tragic since she insisted that she would not be happy until socialism came to Latin America—a utopian goal that seems less obtainable today than perhaps it did in Latin America's "revolutionary moment."