

MOVIE REVIEW

Allende's Chile Shown in 'Avenue of Americas'

In Chile, on Nov. 3, 1970, Dr. Salvador Allende became the first freely elected Marxist president in the Western Hemisphere. On Sep. 11, 1973, Allende's Popular Unity government was toppled by a bloody military coup.

"Avenue of the Americas" (which screens tonight only at the Fox Venice Theater) is an extremely well made, deeply disturbing, 82-minute film about Chile, which is closer in tone and substance to Gian Carlo Menotti's opera "The Consul" than to the documentary that it really is. The film is dedicated to its American scriptwriter, Charles Horman, who was arrested and killed by the military junta one week after the 1973 coup—a few hours after he was denied asylum by the U.S. Embassy in Santiago.

The film is a comprehensive, historical tract about the events leading to Allende's election and his subsequent overthrow, as well as being an indictment of United States complicity in the Sep. 11 coup.

"Avenue of the Americas" encompasses a broad spectrum, both geographically and socially, of footage shot in Chile between 1970 and 1973. Scenes from cities, shanty towns, factories, schools, farms and mines provide the settings for informative interviews with workers, peasants, miners, students and professionals, who discuss with joyful optimism the quality of their lives before and during the Allende government.

The film also shows the extreme poverty in Chile, where half of all children under 15 suffer from malnutrition.

Interviews with politicians and intellectuals, who discuss the implications of CIA and corporate involvement in Chile, are also included. Among others interviewed are Philip Agee, former CIA officer in Latin America; Mrs. Allende; Pentagon Papers' defendant Daniel Ellsberg; Nobel Prize-winner George Wald and Joyce Horman, the widow of Charles Horman.

—LINDA GROSS