

CHILE

One Year Later: Absolute Order

"Chile," said Santiago's Ambassador to Washington Walter Heitmann last week, "is going to be a masterpiece of democracy." The occasion for that grandiose claim was the first anniversary of the death of Marxist President Salvador Allende Gossens and the replacement of his elected government by a military regime. In light of the junta's record of suspended civil rights, torture of political prisoners and abolition of Congress, the ambassador's assertion seemed an overstatement. The thousands of Chileans who gathered in Santiago to commemorate the coup of Sept. 11 seemed to be celebrating the absolute order imposed by the junta after the chaos of a year ago. The "new Chile" proclaimed by its military rulers resembles much more a totalitarian than a democratic state.

The junta did use the anniversary, however, to announce an end to some of its harsher measures. Army General Augusto Pinochet Ugarte, Chile's stern-visaged chief of state, told a crowded

power for "10, 15, 20 or even 25 years."

The junta leaders are determined never to permit a return to the rule of old-style politics and politicians who, they feel, brought the country to the brink of ruin. "Elections divide, political parties divide," explained one veteran diplomat in Santiago. "There isn't any room for either in this government's thought." Instead, the junta seems bent on building up family units, communities and unions, all carefully controlled from the top, as the best way of expressing Chilean interests.

Police Sweeps. Thus nobody sees much chance for an immediate end to such control devices as the 1 a.m. to 5:30 a.m. curfew, the operations of the five domestic intelligence services, or the periodic police sweeps through urban shantytowns in search of "subversives." The Congress remains closed (the building serves as a center where records of political detainees are kept), while political parties are still suspended. TIME Buenos Aires Bureau Chief Rudolph

GERRETSON—GAMMA



CHIEF OF STATE AUGUSTO PINOCHET UGARTE REVIEWING CHILEAN TROOPS

assembly of coup supporters that political prisoners—"with the exception of a few particularly serious cases"—would be allowed "to leave forever the national territory." Already Orlando Letelier, former Foreign Minister and Ambassador to the U.S., had left his Chilean prison for exile in Venezuela. But Pinochet also put an end to any hopes that a genuine loosening of the junta's grip was in the making. He blandly told a crowded press conference that the military might well remain in

Rauch, who visited Chile last week, reports that even many who opposed Allende are fearful that complaining in public—about the high cost of living, for example—could have dire consequences. They have good reason for their fear, since large numbers of Chileans are still being arrested. Last week Amnesty International charged, moreover, that the torture of political prisoners was still going on in Chile. A report issued by the London-based human rights organization claims that beatings, electric shock

and deprivation of food and sleep are common practices.

Another unsettling, and from the junta's point of view unwelcome, disclosure came from Washington. A letter by Democratic Congressman Michael Harrington of Massachusetts, leaked to the press last week, contained some devastating excerpts from testimony earlier this year by CIA Director William Colby before the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Intelligence. Colby apparently admitted that the CIA, with White House approval, had funneled some \$8 million into Chile between 1970 and 1973, first to keep Allende from being elected and later to weaken his government. The revelations were potentially damaging to Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, who chaired the so-called Forty Committee that approved the covert CIA operations, as well as to former Ambassador to Santiago Edward M.

CIA DIRECTOR COLBY



WALTER REBER

DETAINEES AT SANTIAGO STADIUM (1973)



Korry and former Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs Charles A. Meyer. These and other Kissinger deputies have testified in congressional hearings that the U.S. did not interfere at any time in Chilean life.

Colby's testimony was also embarrassing to the military rulers of Chile. The disclosures cast doubt on the junta's claim that it was misrule by Allende and the politicians that brought ruin to Chile. Indeed, some experts believe that the CIA disruptions, combined with the curtailment of U.S. foreign aid credits and bank loans, contributed greatly to Allende's economic woes.

Real Hunger. The junta has had its problems in correcting those troubles. The Allende government, by exhausting reserves of foreign exchange, boosting wages and subsidizing food prices to an unreasonable degree, bequeathed an inflation that totaled 842%. The junta's team of fiscal technocrats, many of them disciples of University of Chicago Economist Milton Friedman, have applied a tough austerity program that has let prices rise while holding down wages to keep demand in check. So far, Chile's inflation has come down to a projected 250%-300% for 1974. Still, the average laborer needs to work four hours to earn enough for a kilo of bread; between October and June of 1974, milk increased 300% in price, sugar 192% and cooking oil 224%. Add to that an unemployment rate of around 10% and, as one foreign ambassador in Santiago puts it, "there is no way they can have avoided real hunger in the *poblaciones* [shantytowns] this winter." To ease the pressure on the poor, Pinochet last week announced a 23% hike in the minimum wage and regular wage adjustments every quarter, based on the consumer price index.

Despite these problems, and some muted criticism of the regime's regressive policies by Catholic churchmen and leaders of the divided Christian Democratic Party, there is little serious opposition to the junta. Reports TIME's Rauch: "The majority of Chileans I have talked to inside the country strongly favor what has happened here. Perhaps most people are too relieved at the restoration of order to be angry at the loss of their parliamentary liberties. Despite inflation, the middle class, which deserted Allende, can still manage to make ends meet. Many Chileans, even avid supporters of the coup, will concede that they are living under a dictatorship. But they see it as a necessary transition period and plead that, given enough time, they will come out of it in a uniquely Chilean way."