

The Big Question In Chile

By Frank Blatchford
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SANTIAGO — The question that puzzles Chileans today is where the new military junta is headed, both politically and economically.

In the wake of the coup which overthrew Marxist President Salvadore Allende, at least five political trends are evident:

- The new government is anti-Marxist. It has banned all Marxist parties — the Socialists, the Communists, and the United Popular Action Movement.

- The government is anti-foreigner and is rounding up left-wing foreign "extremists" to face court-martial for crimes against the state. Furthermore, the junta has made it clear that Chile's new government will be purely Chilean in nature (whatever that means) and will not copy any other country's political or economic system.

- The junta is not an interim government but is here to stay. The new government is anti-politician, blaming them for the chaos in the country. Consequently, all political parties that have not been banned have been placed "in recess." Congress has been closed, local elected mayors and aldermen throughout the country have been dismissed from their posts.

- The government is making an unabashedly nationalistic pitch for a return to old moral and social values. The army is encouraging long-haired youths to get a haircut and women to wear skirts instead of pants.

- Economically, the future course of Chile is uncertain. The junta has said only that it will not follow any existing models.

Two Roads

Fernando Aguero, a prominent Chilean economist and technical manager of the Chilean equivalent to the U.S. National Association of Manufacturers, said in an interview that two major roads are open.

He said Chile could follow the old road — a socialist

economy which has more or less been the system here since 1940.

Or, he said, Chile could choose a free market economy which has brought economic growth to countries like Brazil.
