

Junta's Harsh Economic Measures Stagger

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SANTIAGO, Chile, Nov. 4 — Seven weeks after overthrowing the Marxist coalition Government, Chile's military junta continues to tighten its control.

The implacable campaign against many supporters of the late President Salvador Allende Gossens goes on and throughout the country a night curfew forces most people into a disciplined daily routine that takes them from work and back.

The factories are humming, and the fields are tended with an energy unseen in the last three years.

Encountering no visible opposition, the military has dictated policy in business, agriculture, education and the press.

For the anti-Marxist majority, the euphoria over the Sept. 11 coup has largely worn off. Although the junta's supporters clearly outnumber its opponents, the harsh measures taken to revive the chaotic economy have visibly staggered most Chileans.

Injustices Go Unmentioned

The brutality unleashed against the left in a country with a strong democratic and libertarian tradition has caused growing discomfort even among some who welcomed the coup.

"I know many innocent people have been killed," a leading conservative jurist conceded. "But this is not the time to speak up. I only hope the worst is over."

The newspapers—only those that support the junta are allowed to publish and they are censored—make no mention of injustices. The vaunted civil courts, including the Supreme Court, remain silent.

At least 2,000 people have lost their lives — most of them victims of unannounced executions carried out after resistance to the armed forces had ended — and several thousand suspected leftists remain in detention centers. Numerous former government employes, "extremist" workers and peasants have lost their jobs.

Military officers have publicly conceded that they expect small urban guerrilla groups to appear. But for now at least, only ineffective, isolated snipers have challenged security forces in Santiago and other major cities.

The Fear on the Left

The tranquility that members of the anti-Marxist majority profess contrasts sharply with the deep insecurity felt by former Allende supporters.

Earlier this week a leftist who held a minor post in the previous Government emerged from hiding for a few hours to talk about his life during the last six weeks.

"I know that they are not looking for me now," he said. "But every time I decide to come out of hiding I think about everybody who has been killed or imprisoned. All it takes is some little man in government with a personal grudge against me or some army lieutenant who thinks the

only good Marxist is a dead one."

"We do not persecute anybody because of his ideas," Gen. Gustavo Leigh Guzmán, the air force commander and a member of the four-man junta, has said. But the bitterness left over from three turbulent years of political polarization under the Allende Government has not even begun to dissipate.

At a dinner this week, a young army lieutenant, suddenly aware that the girl seated next to him was an Allende sympathizer, berated her mercilessly.

"We have been too easy on you people," he said. "If you had won, the rest of us would not be sitting at this table."

The Right Takes Over

The ability of the junta to harness this widespread anti-Marxist sentiment has smoothed the radical transformations it has directed.

The military men who have replaced the rectors in the universities have depended on the organized support of conservative professors and students to purge leftists and keep the institutions functioning.

To reorganize public health, the junta turned to the conservative Medical College of Chile — roughly equivalent to the American Medical Association. The system of neighborhood clinics set up by leftists was abolished in favor of the former hospital system backed by conservative doctors.

The hundreds of factories illegally taken over and largely mismanaged by the Allende Government have been turned

over to their former private managers on the advice of the most important business association.

The critical shortage of consumer products has been ended, at least temporarily, and the rampant black market eliminated, thanks largely to the cooperation of the right-wing shopkeepers associations, which had hoarded huge quantities of goods during the Allende era.

Despite the well-organized civilian support, the junta's popularity will largely depend on the success of its economic measures.

Radios blare the new slogan, "The party is over, now it's time to pay the bill." And to insure that the country produces more than it consumes — in contrast to the last two years of the Allende Government — a radical belt-tightening program has been put into effect.

Dramatic price increases aimed at restoring the true market value of products have reduced real wages and consumption among all economic groups.

Inevitably, the junta's calls for economic measures have hit the working-class hardest.

Faced with inflation that Government officials predict will reach 600 per cent for 1973 and at least 200 per cent more next year, workers will have trouble obtaining even the basic necessities.

At the same time, workers will bear the brunt of efforts to increase industrial production. Already the workweek has been lengthened from 44 hours to 48.

Those workers not inspired by patriotic calls for "national reconstruction" are cowed by the possibility of losing their jobs. So-called "extremists" have been dismissed at hundreds of factories, and all union activity has been prohibited.

Even if political discrimination ends, unemployment looms as a critical problem. Under President Allende, the jobless rate in the greater Santiago area was lowered from 8 per cent to less than 4 per cent by the creation of thousands of fictional posts in government enterprises and agencies.

The junta is probably more politically concerned with the reaction to the price increases

Chileans

among its middle-class supporters. It was the middle-class unions and professional associations that paved the way for the military coup by their unyielding opposition to the Allende Government.

Among these groups, the small and medium private farmers, who stand to make a windfall from the higher food prices, will benefit economically in the short run.

But price increases have already drastically affected salaried middle-class employes. A pair of shoes will cost the average white-collar worker 25 per cent of his monthly salary, and gasoline for his automobile can take another 25 per cent.