

# Chileans Fear End of

## Santiago

Rafael Cabrerias Vargas was selling peanuts and chocolate from his hand cart in eastern Santiago three weeks ago when the police ordered him off the streets. The Organization of American States was coming to town, and the country's image would suffer from the sight of too many people living on the fringe of the economy.

The OAS meeting continues, but already the government is claiming that such careful preparations have paid off, that the gathering is a diplomatic and public relations triumph for Chile.

Among ordinary Chileans, however, the reaction is mixed. Many worry about a possible crackdown when the OAS leaves, especially on those who initiated contact with delegates and reporters.

OAS delegates, President Augusto Pinochet said in a rural town last week, "will have seen in an objective way how in Chile human rights are respected. They will have appreciated how all the people support the government." The official Daily El Cronista quoted Foreign Minister Dudley Thompson of Jamaica, the conference's most eloquent orator on the subject of human rights, as saying on departure, "I believe the foreign press is very wrong" about Chile. "I have seen many happy people."

OAS Secretary General Alejandro Orfila said he was impressed here by "the great liberty of access to the news," while Costa Rican Foreign Minister Gonzalo Facio said he saw no evidence of a police state. "There's nothing here to criticize," he said.

"The delegates have been able to appreciate that Chileans don't hide anything, that public information is ample and unrestricted, and that the general tone of life in one of optimism and confidence," editorialized El Mercurio. The paper rocked the conference last week by printing the full text of a secret and highly explicit OAS commission attack on human rights violations in Chile, an event cited in many private conversations as an astonishing gamble by the government.

In Nothorn Providencia, the shantytown area of 800,000 persons, the OAS has had a different impact. Until ordered off the street, the peanut seller Cabrerias had been the sole support of his sister and her three children since the arrest on November 3 of his brother-in-law, Alfredo Ernesto Salinas Vasquez.

Salinas' daughter, Albina Higenia, 19, has been trying unsuccessfully since that date to locate her father, a construction worker and former Communist.

He is one of about 740 persons that have simply disappeared in the last year, according to sources. "They told Rafael he can't go back to selling until after the conference is over, and then not without a permit, which costs 750 pesos" (about \$56), the girl said. "How can he get the money together if he can't work?"

The family lives in a vast slum area in which wooden shacks with tin roofs huddle along soggy pathways and narrow muddy streets. Women coming back from marketing carry one or two small shopping bags of vegetables and bread. Ground meat at 50 cents a pound is too expensive for most.

One woman, the wife of a theater usher, said she was glad the OAS was in town. "Maybe if some of them

come out here they'll see the real Chilean reality," she said. "Things are much worse than six months ago. Nobody has any work." She said friends on the Chilean version of WPA, the "minimum labor" plan, had been given two weeks vacation with pay "so it won't look like we're so poor we have to make up things for people to do."

The "minimum labor" program has given thousands of Chileans work on public works projects for a salary of about \$29 a month plus free flour, sugar and other food staples. Enrique, 32, an electrician, stopped on his bicycle to say he had lost his job at a factory in town to a "minimum labor" worker that the state could get to do the same job for less money.

Ramon Jimenez, 23, not his real name, was among 207 political prisoners released just before the OAS conference after Treasury Secretary William Simon warned Chile in May that further good U.S.-Chile relations depended on evidence of human rights observance. A leftist student, Jimenez, had been arrested in January, 1975, after briefly sheltering

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fugitive leader Andres Pascal Allende, of the outlawed Revolutionary Leftist Movement.

"I was tortured for three days in Villa Grimaldi," he said, referring to a known interrogation center recently evacuated. Electric shocks were applied to his body while he lay on a wet metal table, he said, as he was asked about the names of other movement members.

After a month in Villa Grimaldi, Jimenez continued, he was transferred to four successively less restricted prisons: Four Alamos, Three Alamos, the work camp El Retoque and finally the large prison Puchuncavi, from which he was released just before the OAS conclave began.

His family learned of his whereabouts in February, 1975, from a priest making prison visits, he said, and thereafter pressured for his freedom. "My connection was minimal with anything they wanted to know so they finally let me out," he said. He added that communication among prisoners is good, that the food

is "tolerable" and that recreation, library study and even some television are allowed for the prisoners.

Word that the OAS delegates seemed impressed with what they were seeing here made a priest working in this district shake his head. "When you all leave there's going to be a massive roundup of everyone you talked to, I'm sure of it," he said.

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