

Stories of Repression In Chile

By Richard Gott
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Santiago

The situation in Chile appears to be far more serious than the communiqués of the military junta have allowed the world to believe.

There is little evidence that the junta does not physically control the country, but it is clear that this control is being maintained with a degree of repression uncommon in Latin America.



Eight days after the September 1 coup that overthrew the government of President Salvador Allende, the frontiers of the country were opened to admit a charter plane load of more than 100 journalists from all over the world, who had been waiting in Buenos Aires.

In the first few hours after our arrival, I was able to talk to witnesses who had seen things that left them still quivering with rage, anger and shock. Shock is perhaps the best word to describe the state of mind of supporters and sympathizers of the deposed Popular Unity government.

It seems that few people were prepared for the ferocity of the counter-revolution.

MASSACRE

In Santiago things have been bad enough — an apparent massacre at the Technical University, bodies in the Mapocho river, the destruction of the Sumar textile factory — but reports coming in from outlying districts in the south suggest that there the repression may be worse.

One foreign girl who teaches in the southern town of Temuco got off the bus Wednesday in Santiago with a hair-raising story.

this group had announced its intention to disband, its aims apparently having been achieved.

In Temuco as elsewhere, the urban middle class is unable to restrain its delight at what has been happening.

"We'd prefer this than to have the Russians in," is one example of the views of the supporters of the new regime.

I have not been able to verify all the stories I have been told about what has been happening in Santiago during the past week, but the general picture is of continuing clashes between the inhabitants of the shanty town slums and the police in their search for arms.

In the port of Valparaiso, the resistance seems to have been stronger, and there is still no telephone contact.

There is a long list of people connected with the Allende government who have been asked to give themselves up, and they are threatened with the death penalty if they do not do so. Latin American embassies sympathetic to Allende, principally those of Mexico, Peru and Argentina, have filled up with refugees, and it is difficult for additional ones to get in. Some European embassies have been taking in people believed to be threatened.

One young English visitor spent two days last week in the national stadium where thousands of prisoners, many of them foreign, are being held, and some reportedly being shot.

SIGNS

There is every sign of the situation getting worse. The new regime has announced that all arms must be handed in to the authorities by Sunday. Those found possessing them after that date will be shot.

— General Pedro Ewing, the new secretary general of the government, told reporters that the armed forces would search everywhere for arms until they have all been found.

Assistance to the junta is close at hand. Wednesday morning's headline in the right-wing daily *El Mercurio* announced that Chile was to receive a new credit of \$65 million from the Inter-American Development Bank. The president of the bank, which is dominated by the U.S., said that "political changes in a country do not alter our long-term intentions."

Hundreds of people have been arrested, she said, accused of nothing more than cooperation with the Allende government. Lists of local people wanted by the army are read over the radio, and edict No. 30 of the Temuco local government, she said, states that "for every innocent dead, ten detainees will be killed."

Supporters of the previous government have had their heads shaved, she reported, and this applies not only to young people but to persons 50 or 60 years old.

STRONGHOLD

This part of the country has become a stronghold of the fascist "Fatherland and Freedom" organization whose leader, Pablo Rodriguez, returned to Chile clandestinely two days before the coup and held a press conference in Temuco.

Military sources said that, while the new government would pursue left-wing extremists with the utmost vigor, it was no longer necessary to pursue "Fatherland and Freedom" because