

Neo-Fascists Close to Chile Military Junta

The writer of this dispatch was in Chile at the time of the military coup and recently left the country.

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BUENOS AIRES — "We have reached our goal now. Our mission is accomplished," said a member of Chile's neo-fascist Fatherland and Freedom movement shortly after a military coup deposed the leftist government of President Salvador Allende.

Now, three weeks after the coup in which Allende died, it is too soon to evaluate the role of the far right-wing movement in the

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events leading up to the military takeover. But the paramilitary organization's goal has always been clear.

Two weeks before the coup, the movement's secretary general Roberto Thieme, 32, said in an interview: "Our purpose is to accelerate the country's chaos and to provoke a military takeover as soon as possible." Thieme added that it wouldn't be long before the goal was accomplished.

"We know that most of the officers are ready to move. Only the top command is still undecided," he said.

Shortly afterwards, when Thieme was arrested by Allende's secret police, a high government official conceded privately that there might be "a grain of truth" in Thieme's assessment, "But basically" he said, "it is a gross exaggeration."

Charges Dismissed

Last week the new military rulers let Thieme out of jail, dismissing the charges placed against him by the Allende government: subversion of the armed forces, acts of sabotage, criminal association and illegal possession of arms.

Thieme had all but confessed to the charge of subversion of the armed forces since Fatherland and Freedom had claimed a role in an unsuccessful military coup of June 29.

Now, after a spell of military rule and hundreds and perhaps thousands of deaths, Fatherland and Freedom shows no doubts whatsoever about the methods of the armed forces. Having publicly taken credit for numerous terrorist acts, the movement's shock troops are not easily taken aback.

If anything, these most conservative members of Chilean society are concerned about the lack of "political definition still existing inside the military junta." The conservative sectors of Chile have not had a taste of power since Eduardo Frei, a Christian Democrat, was elected on a reformist platform in 1964. So Fatherland and Freedom and the National Party from which it was born are straining to assess the military's political stance.

While there are signs of disagreement inside the military Cabinet and some of its members seem inclined to less than an ultraconservative posture, it seems for the moment that the ideologues of Fatherland and Freedom need not feel threatened.

Both the junta and Fatherland and Freedom have spoken of the "purity" of the "military movement," of Chile's need to stop importing "foreign ideologies" and return to "nationalism." They have agreed that Chile is a country "poisoned by its political awareness" and by the "Communist cancer," and they have called for a halt to "the struggle of the classes."

Likewise Roberto Thieme and junta member Gen. Gustavo Leigh agree on the need for outlawing Marxist parties for a new constitution and an "integral parliament" in which the military youth, women, unions and professional associations will play an important role.

The new "unionism," or "corporativism" as it is discussed in government and Fatherland and Freedom circles, implies a greater political role for professional associations and "employers'

unions" (confederations of owners of industry, land and businesses). Such concepts, a leading Christian Democratic Party member said, are "comparable to the Spanish and Portuguese government systems, and provide the best way to reserve political power for the economically dominant classes."

In an interview before the military coup, Patricio Aylwin, leader of the Christian Democratic Party, showed his unease about the ideas of the Fatherland and Freedom movement, made up largely of angry and wealthy young men.

"They are the sort of people from which the Nazis used to recruit," he said.

Movement Dissolved

Meanwhile, the ultraconservative movement has responded to the military order to do away with political parties. Pablo Rodriguez, the movement's founder who returned to Chile from political exile just two days before the coup, announced that the movement has been dissolved. Privately however, one leading member said that Fatherland and Freedom will return as a new organization, "as a nationalist movement, to integrate Chile's youth into a new functional democracy."

Meanwhile, observers here agree that the political profile of the military junta, and for that matter, Fatherland and Freedom as well, will require some gestation time to become more coherent. Meanwhile they are reviving the controversial question of the movement's financing.

Before the coup, Chile's leftist press frequently accused the United States and specifically the Central Intelligence Agency of providing funds to opponents of Allende, but no details to substantiate the accusations were provided.

From well-placed sources it was learned that on the home front Fatherland and Freedom received generous financial support from the confederation of industrialists, who were much harmed by Allende's expropriation policies, and from the landowners association which has fought land reform programs since the days of President Frei. The most visible arm of Fatherland and Freedom is the radio station owned by "Sociedad Agricultura," the landowners' group, which broadcast the rightists' communiques and, in the words of one of its employees, "did much to create hatred against Salvador Allende."

Abroad, according to secret police reports from the Allende government, Fatherland and Freedom received "at least the help of Paraguay, Bolivia and Brazil."

These reports cite for example "Operation Bondeirantes," a training camp held this spring at Santa Cruz, a Bolivian town near the Brazilian border. Close to 250 members of Fatherland and Freedom were given paramilitary training, these secret reports said, "by members of the Bolivian and Brazilian armies who had been previously trained in the U.S. Canal Zone in Panama."

Exiles' Donations

Money has also been donated by Chileans in exile in Argentina and the United States, these police reports indicated.

Although the movement has now reportedly dissolved, the militancy of many of its members and sympathizers has clearly not declined.

A number of them have joined the military government. One former member, Alvaro Puga, director of the "Agricultura" radio station was present when a foreign correspondent was recently "interrogated" by seven military officers about "inaccurate dispatches." According to one of his colleagues, Puga now coordinates military press information.

The official spokesman of the junta is Frederico Willoughby, previously employed briefly by the United States Information Agency, the Ford Motor Co., and until recently, by the right-wing landowners' group.