

CHILE: A COUP AN

The Junta's First Month

By Lewis H. Diuguid

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SANTIAGO—More than a month after the coup, Chileans still stare in awe at the one visible symbol of that violent day, the shattered facade of the Moneda presidential palace where Salvador Allende died.

A schoolboy fingers the depth of the bullet holes in the ancient masonry. Workmen reenact with swoops of their hands the trajectory of the jets that blew down great doors with their rockets.

For a society that had lived so remarkably free of violence, the attack on the very symbol of constitutional rule was traumatic. But the armed forces probably acted with majority support. The democracy that had characterized Chile for 40 years was in collapse.

The electorate was polarized into pro- and anti-Allende camps that could not reach the minimum of accord needed to function. It may turn out that the military intervention was a substitute for civil war, forestalling large-scale death and destruction by use of violence that was cruel and arbitrary, but limited.

It may be, too, that the instability has only begun rather than ended. The last dictatorship here lasted four years, ending in 1931 in a chaos that then consumed nine governments in 12 months.

The evidence of the first month indicates that the armed forces will make a serious, long-term effort to achieve two goals that may prove unreachable:

- Neutralization of the pro-Allende, Marxist pole of the presently divided society. Its top leaders are being exiled, jailed or even killed. But the gen-

erals are determined to persuade the 35 to 45 per cent of the electorate which consistently voted for Allende that his brand of politics did not serve the national interests.

- Rationalization of the economy. At the end of Allende's three years, inflation that ran over 350 per cent annually was the sharpest symptom of Chile's failure to respond to the exigencies of a characteristically weak economy. Production was falling and investment was virtually unknown.

As the armed forces organized their rule, their biggest asset seemed to be that awe of modern firepower so palpable among the gapers in front of the palace.

But Chileans, brought up in an atmosphere of political liberty and a free, often irresponsible press (now down to three pro-junta dailies), already are casting a fish eye on the generals. For many who have personally experienced military rule since the coup, in house searches and arbitrary arrests, the spirit of anti-militarism that had disappeared in the late '30s is making a comeback.

Asked how long their intervention will last, the junta leaders speak of two, four, 10 years, whatever is needed to do the job. But down in the anti-Allende province of Cautin, the military boss already is thinking in a different time span.

The takeover there, according to Col. Hernan Ramirez, "was a cup of milk." But he adds: "We know that we are going to start paying for it in five months. They're going to be saying, 'Just look at those military.'"

A trip through the southern prov-

ND ITS AFTERMATH

inces turned up several local commanders who showed a candor, perception and flexibility that has not typified the junta itself so far. Indeed, if the incipient anti-militarism is moderated it will be because of rapport between such troop commanders and spokesmen for local interests.

How Many Deaths?

THE MATTER of anti-militarism is, like all major issues in this first month, heavily affected by the question of just how much killing occurred during the coup and after it.

As yet, no definitive information is available. This lack has spawned numerous sensationalized reports of several thousand dead. So far, the locales where such violence was alleged to have taken place have produced no corroborative evidence.

Apparently no major resistance occurred on Sept. 11, except at the palace. The question is, how many were later executed in sham resistance and concocted escapes? The junta has announced daily death tolls of two to 10 even though outward signs of struggle have long since disappeared.

This contributes to concern that hundreds of secret executions of vigilante killings may have been carried out. But a rough sum of morgue counts, bodies turned up in the shallow waters of Santiago's only river and the observations of dispassionate Chileans and foreigners suggests that the death total to date is unlikely to pass 1,000. The late, but rising official total is now over 500, less than a tenth of them military.

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United Press International

Riot police guarding the presidential palace in Santiago. →



Photos by Lewis Diuzguid

The damaged presidential palace (right) is repaired as life returns to normal in Santiago.

Chile: What Kind of Future?

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Political violence was the most dramatic evidence of the polarization that climaxed under Allende. In the previous decade, the one infamous act of physical violence—as distinct from chronic verbal violence of the press and politicians—was the killing of eight striking copper workers by the national police in 1966.

Even before Allende assumed power, the extreme right had assassinated the army commander-in-chief. Next a former cabinet officer was machine-gunned. His extreme leftist assailant avoided capture by blowing himself up with dynamite in front of police headquarters.

Chile had never witnessed such acts. The next two years were punctuated by over a dozen deaths of land invaders, those who defended against land invasions, student political leaders caught in intramural Marxist gang warfare, and leaders who fought out the differences between pro- and anti-Allende forces.

One of the last apparent assassinations, of Allende's aide-de-camp, was blamed by the president on Fascist gunmen. Even before the coup, however, the bulk of evidence had shifted probable blame to a member of Allende's staff.

In the last month, tear gas became a prime ingredient of the capital's smog as rock-throwing brawlers fought for control of the streets.

Mass marches for or against the government continued. Those supporting Allende always assumed that the hundreds of thousands turning

out to help on short notice would also do so to defend any attempts against him. Today, low-lying militants explain the lack of response on failure of leadership, the military's domination of weaponry, and the surprise factor.

In turn, the armed forces area commanders are now asking workers, "Where were your leaders?" The newspapers expend much propaganda, with hyperbole unusual even for Chile, to show that Marxist leaders were too busy feathering their own nests to look out for the workers. "We will provide the benefits that they only promised," is the line.

Another effect of the polarization was misuse of scarce technicians in industry. As the junta now attempts to displace Marxists deemed untrustworthy, it is calling back people who, in case after case, had been dismissed or driven to quit after initially serving under Allende.

The country, which is short of trained technicians, is thus in the stew of trying to maintain two alternate platoons for ideological reasons. Several agronomists relegated to unimportant posts under the Allende government were on the point of leaving en masse to work in agrarian reform for another Latin nation.

Now they are back, and the Marxist agronomists are out. This is occurring across the board, though examples turn up of pro-Allende experts being encouraged to stay on jobs.

There are indications that the old Chilean flair for accommodation has not disappeared entirely. To cite one case: In the junta head-

quarters, I encountered a girl working as a private secretary to a top officer. From the start to the end of the Allende government, she had been the right hand of a key member of the official presidential family. Where, one had to wonder, did her loyalty lie then, and now?

And while the military's book-burning campaign shocked Chilean intellectuals as well as those abroad, it was sporadic and short-lived. Perhaps the pressure of opinion is the reason. In any case, much Marxist literature remains in place. A notable example: In the austere library of the city morgue, on a shelf with tomes on physiology and legal medicine, are the complete works, in Spanish and English, of North Korean Party Chief Kim Il-Sung.

The junta's first demonstration of insensitivity to world opinion was the handling of the announcement of Allende's death.

The several versions floated, and the secrecy that impeded clarification, produced charges of execution that still linger abroad. Here, however, nearly all Chileans accept the official versions that Allende took his life with two shots from an automatic weapon, a gift from Fidel Castro.

Parties in Turmoil

THOSE TWO SHOTS marked the end of an era in Chilean politics. "One shot in passing killed the Socialist Party, and the other mortally wounded the Christian Democrats," said a callous politician of the conservative National Party. The rapidity with which old political lines are being redrawn is itself a warning to the junta

in its proclaimed determination to depoliticize Chile.

The Marxist parties are dissolved by fiat, whatever their long-term prospects. The other parties are "suspended." A Christian Democrat sees this arrangement favoring the Communists, the only party with the organization and experience to maintain itself underground. The party was outlawed briefly in the late '40s and survived intact.

For the Christian Democrats, the largest and ideologically most diverse party, survival is complicated by divisions on what attitude to take toward the coup.

Former president Eduardo Frei declares without hesitation that the military prevented a Marxist seizure of dictatorial power. But a dozen younger leaders, including three former party presidents, defied party discipline by issuing their own absolute opposition to the coup. Radomiro Tomic, the party's presidential candidate in 1970 and now the leader of its left wing, indicated the turmoil within the Christian Democrats in an interview.

He placed the principal blame for collapse of democracy on Allende's coalition but said that all parties were responsible in the failure to reach accord. He denied that the Christian Democrats as a party had conspired to overthrow the government but declared that individual members had done so.

Finally, poignantly, Tomic acknowledged that the coup had altered what was for the last three years his formula for future accord. While Frei had led the party away from alignment with Allende, Tomic had quietly called for a coalition of the Communist, Socialist and Christian Democratic parties. *Realpolitik* has redefined the "triple alliance" he seeks: He now envisions a coalition of the Marxist parties, the Christian Democrats and the armed forces.

As has been the case until now, Frei probably reflects the attitude of the rank-and-file, not Tomic. Even the left-leaning members acknowledge that the current party spirit is to cooperate with the junta. But Frei personally is concerned that the junta may aggravate social divisions rather than heal them by its policies and its duration.

A Corporate State?

ANOTHER CONCERN of all old-line politicians is the rising power of the gremialistas, or professional brotherhoods. These associations of doctors, teachers, shop owners and truck operators functioned during the Allende years as centers of conservative opposition, using their power to strike as effectively against Allende as had the Marxist labor unions against Frei.

In Valparaiso, Adm. Arturo Troncoso said, "We collaborated with the brotherhoods on a program for months before the intervention." In the provinces, the brotherhood of agronomists is stepping in to take over the agrarian reform. In the cities, the truck operator group is organizing the supply of scarce foodstuffs.

And at the highest level of the junta, the chief political adviser is a young lawyer who brought the brotherhoods' concept of organization to the universities and helped break up Marxist domination there. Jaime Guzman, law professor and unofficial ideologue for the brotherhoods, advises the junta not only on educational matters but on

proposed revision of the now-ruptured constitution.

The constitutional concepts of some of the generals sound fascist—doing away with one-man, one-vote political party organization in favor of representation by trade or profession. But Guzman rejects this as unrealistic in Chile. He talks of an eventual return to a traditional congress, organized along party lines. But he hopes somehow to prevent this partisan concept from suffusing the entire social structure. For him, the state's ability to control the labor movement through party loyalties was itself akin to fascism.

So far, at least, the muted debate of such issues has produced few signs of an evolving fascist or corporatist alternative that will appeal to the military, let alone the general public.

"These groups pulled together in common opposition to Allende, but they will pull apart now that he is gone," said an executive of the *Mercurio* newspapers, which also firmly opposed Allende.

The civilians appointed by the junta to the all-important task of running the economy are conservatives in fiscal and monetary policy but of democratic political persuasion.

In the highly uncertain event that these technicians can speedily right the economy, the short-run stability of the junta could turn on its inner tensions. As Chileans perforce pay much more attention to the military, they find a spectrum of political thought running from extreme conservatism in the navy leadership to relative moderation in the air force, with the army in the middle.

The fourth junta member, Gen. Cesar Mendoza of the national police, is said to be a man without political ambition

at the head of a service similarly inclined. "He is a horseman," said a fellow rider. "We are all alike—he cannot be ambitious."

Disconcerting Images

CHILE UNDER military rule is full of disconcerting images, few of them characteristic of its easygoing past. There were the soldiers sent for the third straight day to search for arms, fruitlessly, at the University of Chile school of fine arts. On the marquee of its theater, closed for the duration, was Garcia Lorca's "Blood Wedding."

But for all the jackboots and curfews, the Chilean military also has a softer face. It survived on the most spartan budgets known to Latin America during the Frei years. And though Allende tried to buy its loyalty through delivery of modern equipment, the troops still travel second class. Most of the patrols through the capital are mounted on aged Chevy pickup trucks, pressed into service and fitted with a last-minute machine gun that would shake loose every bolt if fired.

One rigid trooper in camouflage dress, standing guard at the Moneda palace, did an about-face and revealed to the crowd that someone had sewn up the seat of his pants—in uneven stitches of red thread.

When Chile took the unprecedented step of electing a Marxist president, there was much talk of "the Chilean road to socialism," and of "the Chilean way." Now an uneasy nation wonders whether it can evolve a livable Chilean military rule, whether it can be short-term, and whether the old art of accommodation can be revived thereafter.



The Chilean press, which once abounded with newspapers, has been reduced to three (top right), all pro-government.