

Chile Gives Free Rein to Secret Police

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SANTIAGO, Chile, May 5— After 20 months in power Chile's military junta shows few signs of dismantling the vast apparatus of political repression created to "extirpate the Marxist cancer."

The military took over when the country was bitterly polarized between an anti-Marxist majority and a leftist minority, and rapidly drifting toward economic chaos and a possible civil war. But from its beginning the junta has chosen to treat the followers of the late President Salvador Allende Gossens as a vanquished enemy capable at any time of posing a strong terrorist threat.

According to Government estimates more than 41,000 people — one of every 250 Chileans—have been detained at least temporarily for political reasons.

Church sources who have concerned themselves with political prisoners believe that the figure is closer to 95,000, one of every 100. Both the Government and its domestic critics appear agreed that there are still 5,000 people in prison camps for political reasons.

While vast numbers of people passed through detention in the aftermath of the coup that toppled President Allende in 1973, the arrests and charges of torture have declined in recent months. None-

theless, virtually all international human-rights organizations, including the United Nations and the Organization of American States, have reported systematic and gross violations after repeated visits to Chile.

Earlier this year, in an unprecedented move, the Western European nations that are among Chile's largest creditors refused to consider renegotiating payments on her foreign debt until progress had been achieved in human rights.

The junta and its supporters have attributed their still-deteriorating image to a concerted Marxist campaign that has infiltrated the highest international organizations and the mass

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media, universities and governmental circles in Western countries.

Last week President Augusto Pinochet Ugarte unveiled a new series of rules to prevent "abuses of power that the Government has never approved." They call for the punishment of torturers and require that new detainees be released within five days or turned over to the courts. Intelligence services must inform a detainee's nearest relatives within 48 hours of his arrest.

The junta's domestic critics remain skeptical because scores are still arrested every week and allegations of torture continue to make their way into public records.

On March 19 Luis Guillermo Núñez, one of Chile's best-known painters, was invited to exhibit a series of his works at the French-Chilean Institute of Culture. About 500 people turned up at the opening exhibit of his abstracts, on such themes as social conventions, alienation and loss of freedom.

Despite the fact that the show was partly sponsored by the French Embassy, it was quickly closed by the secret police. The next day Mr. Núñez was arrested at home by secret policemen who, according to the neighbors, arrived in a small pickup truck. His rela-

tives lodged an appeal for a writ of habeas corpus. But he has not been heard from.

Last month Juan Sepúlveda Arancibia, 47-year-old owner of an auto repair shop, was arrested with two of his sons by police detectives who were looking for a third son, Alejandro, allegedly a member of an extreme left-wing organization.

"A detective named Igor Allende comes every day to my home, said Mr. Sepúlveda's wife in a sworn statement to the Santiago Court of Appeals. "On Sunday he told me they were looking for my son Alejandro, who we have not heard from, and he warned us that we better turn him in because it is better to have one dead son instead of three."

The court records show that Mr. Sepúlveda was severely beaten and hung by his arms, and then "they began to apply electric current to the soles of his feet, behind his ears, in his mouth, on his wrists," and to other parts of his body.

The Sepúlvedas were released nine days after they had been detained.

The secret police apparatus has grown to such a degree that it has become a parallel government, in the view of human-rights lawyers and concerned clergymen. There are five intelligence services, with one or two of them rapidly gaining more power than the rest. A network of informers has expanded throughout the shantytowns, factories, schools

and universities. Applicants to public agencies are often screened by the intelligence services.

The agents are able to ignore standards of conduct set by the Government for other officials and ordinary citizens. Occasionally, an intelligence official's eccentric reputation spreads beyond the confines of clandestine interrogation centers.

This is true of Comdr. Edgar Ceballos, a leader of air force intelligence, a burly man in his early forties who has reportedly often taken a personal hand in torture.

"With leftist military officers who were detained he was a beast and worked them over with an uncontrolled animal fury," said a man well-acquainted with several of the victims.

With civilian suspects, some of them left-wing extremists, he has mixed severe torture with personal courtesies, it is

said. He has invited some to snacks at Nico's, a well-known pizzeria in an upper-class neighborhood. Sometimes he arranges rendezvous for prisoners with their woman friends in apartments rented by air force intelligence. After a vacation on Easter Island he brought back key chains as gifts for favorite prisoners.

Recently he has had a running battle with another agency, called National Intelligence Headquarters, which has emerged as the most powerful of the secret police services. Commander Ceballos has retained several political prisoners as part of his personal entourage in an effort to keep them from the organization, known as DINA.

Among his proteges is Robinson Pérez, a former head of the Socialist party's paramilitary group, formed shortly before the 1972 coup when suspicions were growing that the military

were planning to overthrow Dr. Allende's Marxist regime. Commander Ceballos succeeded in obtaining for Mr. Peré a relatively light 15-year sentence, which he has been serving as a sort of personal secretary for the commander.

Another protege is Adolfo Puz, a Socialist who led a bazooka attack against a police bus during the coup. One of the few incidents of resistance, the attack killed more than a dozen policemen.

Mr. Puz has not yet been sentenced; Commander Ceballos convinced the military courts to try him on violation of the arms control law, a far lesser charge than he could have expected.

Last month air force security officers under Commander Ceballos secretly spirited Tomás González Reese to sanctuary in the Papal Nuncio's diplomatic residence rather than turn him over to DINA. Mr. Gonzá-

lez was allegedly a member of an extreme left-wing group.

Civilians Hurt by Rivalry

The intelligence rivalry has occasionally enveloped civilians beyond suspicion of leftist activities.

On April 8 Elena Abalos Formes, a businesswoman, sat in her living room negotiating with an officer to rent an apartment to air force intelligence for an interrogation center.

Two men in civilian clothes knocked on her door, identified themselves as members of DINA and announced that they had come to arrest her. When the air force officer and Mrs. Abalos Formes protested that she was a staunch supporter of the junta, one of the agents said: "I will give you 10 minutes to get ready and come with me. If you do not I am going to get you out of here with my fists."

The incident was recounted

by her son in an appeal to a Santiago court for a writ of habeas corpus. He complained that despite his efforts to locate his mother through Government and military channels, he had been unable to obtain any information.

Broad Mandate Given

DINA is led by an army colonel, Manual Contreras, and most of its agents, estimated at 1,000, are army intelligence officers and enlisted men, but it includes members of other military and police branches as well as a growing number of women.

The decree creating the agency at the beginning of 1974 gave it a mandate broad enough to grow into a full-fledged secret police force, theoretically responsible only to the junta.

The decree states that the mission is "to gather all information at a national level from the various theaters of opera-

tion with the purpose of producing the intelligence necessary to formulate policies, planning and the adoption of measures to assure national security and the development of the country."

The same decree gives the agency unlimited access to "the resources that are necessary for its financing" and allows it duty-free imports of equipment and accessories, presumably for interrogation and investigation.

Its agents almost always wear civilian clothes, rarely display identification documents and drive in unmarked cars or refrigerated meat trucks imported by the Allende Government's Public Development Corporation. Its interrogation centers include army garrisons as well as former private properties, the best known of which is Villa Grimaldi, a one-time discotheque on the outskirts of Santiago.