

Leading Chile Party Cools To Military Junta's Rule

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SANTIAGO, Sept. 24 — Chile's Christian Democratic Party, the largest group in opposition to the ousted leftist government of President Salvador Allende, is already putting distance between itself and the ruling military junta, even though the party endorsed last week's coup.

During the final months of the Allende government, the Christian Democrats, who took a mildly socialistic line when they were in power under President Eduardo Frei, began to identify themselves with the rightist opposition.

The Christian Democrats welcomed the coup, but backed off from their initial support of the junta after the generals started dissolving political parties and talking about rewriting the constitution. If the junta desires a speedy return to democratic government it will have to deal with the Christian Democrats, who straddle the country's moderate center, representing 25 to 30 per cent of the electorate.

The Christian Democrats may also need the junta, however, and there are factions at the right-wing end of the party's broad spectrum that wish to work with the military to avoid having the key administrative posts filled by the conservative National Party.

The Christian Democratic leadership has already decided that its members should not accept political jobs under the junta, but that they may accept posts as "technicians." Enrique Bernstein, who was President Frei's ambassador to Rome, is now an adviser to the general who serves as foreign minister.

The Christian Democratic president, Patricio Aylwin reacted to the coup by deploring negative reaction abroad. He said the coup was a necessary pre-emptive action because Allende's

supporters were planning to install a Marxist dictatorship through violence. Aylwin cited the alleged distribution of arms to workers in factories encircling Santiago.

But, on Friday, Aylwin stepped back, saying that the junta's dissolution of political parties was "not satisfactory to us" and that it is still too early to judge the junta's performance.

Meanwhile, 12 Christian Democratic Congressmen, including three past presidents of the party had issued a statement blaming the extremes of the right and left for "creating the false impression that there was no other recourse . . . than armed confrontation or coup d'etat."

In the traditionally faction-ridden Christian Democratic Party, such perceptible differences are par for the course. Even during the Christian Democratic stewardship of President Frei, Allende's immediate predecessor, the party's left wing split off, accusing their leader of going too slow with his "Revolution in Liberty."

That group later joined with the Socialist and Communist parties to help elect Allende in 1970. In the election, Allende won only 36 per cent of the popular vote. The Christian Democrats finally rallied behind him in the congressional vote needed to confirm him as president.

But the Christian Democratic leadership soon became convinced that Allende was not keeping his pledge to carry out his Socialist program within the established legal system. Although Allende occasionally sought reconciliations with the Christian Democrats, they eventually wound up in league with the National Party in efforts to remove Allende before the end of his six-year term.

Patricio Rojas, a Cabinet minister in Frei's government now working closely

with the former president in the party, stressed yesterday the efforts made to reach an agreement with Allende.

In the end, said Rojas, the economic and social crisis was so severe that all of the opposition agreed that Allende must go — the question was how.

Military intervention was firmly opposed by the Christian Democrats, according to Rojas. The party's provincial leaders met on the weekend before the coup and agreed that the Congress and Allende should resign simultaneously and that new elections be called.

No response came from the presidential palace, Rojas said, and two days later the military moved.

After the coup, the ruling council of the party issued a statement saying the chaos brought on by the Allende government made the takeover inevitable. It welcomed the junta's declaration that it had intervened only to restore normality and would bow out at the right time.

Then, the junta decreed the dissolution of the Marxist political parties and said that activities of the rest were "suspended." Heavy censorship was applied and several thousand persons were arrested. Congress was dissolved and the junta began to stress that politics must not be allowed to resume its pre-coup "Tower of Babel" level.

Rojas said the relationship of the party to the junta would depend on the military's actions. The party newspaper, La Prensa, was permitted to resume circulation, while Marxist papers were shut. But La Prensa is under severe censorship.

Most of the junta's "technical" appointees so far, have gone to members of the National Party. Many of its followers have long advocated a corporate state, reminiscent of the way some government institutions have evolved in Spain under Franco.