

Swedish Ambassador Extends Shelter To Refugees of Chile's Political Storm

By MARVINE HOWE
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SANTIAGO, Chile, Sept. 28—Virtually alone, Harald Edelstam saved the Cuban Embassy from being stormed and provided protection to Chilean, Brazilian and other political refugees. He is a prime mover behind an international effort to win guarantees for security for opponents of Chile's new military rulers.

Mr. Edelstam, the Swedish Ambassador here, became known as "The Black Pimpernel" in World War II when he served in the Norwegian Resistance while he was his country's Vice Consul in Norway. Today, he presented to the Chilean Foreign Minister, Vice Adm. Ismael Huerta, an offer from the Swedish Government to receive 200 refugees from Chile on "humanitarian" grounds.

"Our role, the role of the Swedish Embassy, is humanitarian—to try to save the lives of people who are in danger," Ambassador Edelstam said in an interview.

"We know there are lists of people who supported the former regime and who are considered by the new military authorities as criminals and therefore could be executed," Mr. Edelstam said.

He criticized both the United Nations and the International Red Cross, saying neither had acted firmly. "The United Nations has been very weak; one would hope that the world organization and the Red Cross would take more interest in those who are suffering," he said.

The United Nations High Commission for Refugees had sent a representative here to seek to persuade the junta to agree to establishment of a secure area for foreigners who were living here under the Government of President Salvador Allende Gossens as political exiles.

The junta has accused foreign exiles here of supporting what it describes as left-wing plots against the armed forces and has made mass arrests. There are about 14,000 foreigners here, most of them leftist exiles from the neighboring right-wing military dictatorships of Brazil, Uruguay and Bolivia.

This week, Chile's military

rulers informed the United Nations representative, Oldrich Haselman, that they supported the international conventions on refugees but that refugees "who have committed criminal acts here will be tried in Chile."

Ambassador Edelstam told of the military's action against the Cuban Embassy and his role there.

He said that on the afternoon of Sept. 11, the day the coup began, "we saw a lot of soldiers coming to the Cuban chancery," near his residence, that there was firing "and the Cubans put up a good resistance."

The next day, he said, he tried to enter the Cuban premises and a Chilean colonel finally gave him permission to do so for 10 minutes. "I went in and stayed and it was fortunate for the Cubans that I did," he said, "because the military were preparing to storm the embassy."

The Cuban Ambassador, Mario Garcia, asked him to assume protection of the Cuban mission and he accepted, Mr. Edelstam said. He continued:

"At 8 P.M., the Chileans gave the Cubans three hours to leave the country. I helped them pack, get buses and arranged for the Soviet Union's Aeroflot plane, which happened to be at the airport, and 147 Cubans left that night, a half hour before the deadline."

The Swedish Ambassador has assumed charge of all Cuban property and of about 20 political refugees in the Cuban chancery. Among the refugees is Max Marambio, the leader of Dr. Allende's personal guard and a man wanted by the junta. "To protect our guests," the ambassador sleeps nightly at the Cuban Embassy.

Ambassador Edelstam's chief concern now is to obtain safe-conduct passes for the refugees in the two embassies in his charge and other diplomatic missions here.

There are more than 1,000 political refugees in Santiago embassies and hundreds more are trying to get into the embassies. The Argentine Embassy is said to be having serious problems with some 400 refugees who are crowded into tight quarters, with only three bathrooms. There are also large numbers of refugees in the Panamanian and Venezuelan Embassies.

The Mexicans have gotten two plane loads of refugees, including President Allende's widow, out of the country, and still have 170 refugees on their hands waiting to leave. Most of the 170 are Chileans.

"The trouble now is that the military refuse to give safe-conduct passes to exiles until their cases have been examined," Mr. Edelstam said. Sweden, like most European countries, does not have an agreement with Chile on political asylum, but can offer protection to persons whose lives are in danger.

In addition to his Cuban charges, Mr. Edelstam must look out for another score of refugees in the Swedish chancery. These are mostly Brazilian and Chilean intellectuals who were militant Allende supporters.

A young American woman from Madison, Wis., with a 2-year-old baby, said she had first gone to the American Embassy for help. The woman, who would not give her name, said she was told at the embassy to see the Chilean police. "And so I came to the Swedish Embassy for help," she added.