

American's Death Still A Mystery

By Lewis H. Diuguid
Washington Post Staff Writer

SANTIAGO, Oct. 8—The case of graduate student Frank R. Teruggi, the only American known to have died in Chile since last month's military coup, is confused by inadequate and

I that sense, it is typical of many such cases here these days.

Teruggi, by the accounts of his friends, was an admirer of the Chilean socialist experiment but not an activist in it.

His body was positively identified last week in the morgue here. Chilean officials told the U.S. consulate the body was left there by a military patrol on Sept. 22. Cause of death was given as gunshot wounds.

Teruggi, 24, was detained two days earlier, the Chilean officials said, for violation of the curfew, and taken to the National Stadium, where several thousand prisoners are being held.

David Hathaway, with whom Teruggi shared a small suburban house, has declared that no curfew violation occurred, but that they both were arrested at the house during one of the constant search operations being carried out by troops and national police.

Officials informed the consulate that on Sept. 21, Teruggi was interrogated and released for lack of evidence against him. Hathaway, who was in the same cell at the stadium, says he last saw Teruggi that afternoon when guards took him away.

Hathaway was released three days later along with several other Americans at the behest of the U.S. consulate, and on the understanding that he would leave Chile.

Before departure, Hathaway visited the morgue but did not identify any of the bodies as Teruggi's.

The consulate has asked the Chilean authorities where the military patrol that deposited the body at the morgue encountered it and in what condition. No such details have been provided.

A graduate of University of California at Berkeley, Teruggi attended the Center of Social and Economic studies of the University of Chile. He apparently had a teaching assignment while working on a thesis.

According to a colleague at the university, Teruggi was dedicated to his studies, and did not participate actively in politics.

"When the rest of us were marching and shouting at the rallies, I knew I would find Frank back at the edge of the crowd, observing," another colleague said.

Like Teruggi, hundreds of young Americans who were excited by Allende's attempt to achieve socialism through the democratic process came to watch or to take part. Their Latin American counterparts, some of them revolutionaries sought by police at home, came by the thousands.

When the armed forces overthrew President Allende on Sept. 11 and accused foreigners of meddling in Chilean affairs, nationalist anger turned on students like Teruggi.

Though Teruggi is the only known American known to have died in the aftermath of the coup, another is missing under worrisome circumstances. Charles Horman, 31, was last seen by neighbors on Sept. 17. They said he was taken away by troops, but the junta has told the consulate that it has no record of his detention. He was here as a filmmaker, and his wife remains.

The two cases are exceptional among the more than 2,000 Americans living here, at the time of the coup, although more than two dozen were detained and later released. Some of them told of being beaten and threatened. Among those who were not bothered in any way were Thomas and Marjorie Melville, the former Maryknoll missionaries who accused the United States of involvement in Guatemala's campaign against leftists several years ago.

The Melvilles, now graduate students at American University, were in the southern province of Cautin, working on their theses in anthropology. They travelled to Santiago after the coup, then went back to their research without incident.