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CHILE:

# Plot against Allende stopped

By Stephen Torgoff

Quick action on the part of Chilean revolutionary forces has exposed and stopped a plot to overthrow the Popular Unity government.

Documents detailing the conspirators' plans have now been published in the Chilean press. Commentators assert that the main plotters remain at large and that the planned coup has been only postponed, not cancelled.

At 1:30 a.m. on March 25 five army units were to "arrest" Allende and seize the streets of Santiago. The refusal by the government to allow a rightist march earlier that evening helped force the postponement of the military insurrection.

A similar "March for Democracy" was planned for April 12 by the rightist parties.

The march will take place in a climate created by national and international incidents indicating what the left press in Chile calls a "pincer movement" to encircle the country. They include:

- The plot itself, which may implicate the entire rightist opposition.
- A series of armed confrontations in the streets involving ultra-right paramilitary groups.
- U.S. attempts to sabotage Chile's renegotiation of its foreign debt.
- U.S. involvement, now confirmed through columnist Jack Anderson, in attempts to wreck the Chilean economy and promote a military uprising.
- Manufacture by the rightist opposition within the Chilean legislature of the basis for a "legal coup" through Allende's impeachment in the midst of a "constitutional crisis."
- An international press campaign accusing the UP of conspiring against neighboring governments. This campaign has been coordinated by the Inter-American Press Society, widely believed to be a CIA organ.

## MIR uncovers plot

The planned coup d'etat was uncovered by the Movement of the Revolutionary Left (MIR), which later released to the press secret documents written by the plotters. The conspirators reportedly met four times in

March in a mansion outside Santiago and in parked cars. In attendance at the first meeting were representatives of the fascist "Fatherland and Liberty" group, the ultra-right National party and upper-echelon army officers, retired and active duty, believed to belong to right-wing cliques within the army. Also involved were a representative from the newspaper "Mercurio," often referred to as the Chilean New York Times, and several shadowy figures who kept their identity hidden. In another meeting, leading members of the Christian Democratic party (PDC) openly participated, including the chairman of the Senate and ex-PDC President Eduardo Frei's Minister of Finance.

This conspiracy further exposes the alliance of the "liberal" Christian Democrats with the openly fascist right and with armed groups receiving U.S. support.

The plan was to create a climate of crisis and chaos, stirred by bloody incidents, in which the army would be "forced" to intervene. During mid-March, the most serious street incidents since last December took place when

armed rightist youths attempted to attack the presidential palace in downtown Santiago. Leftist youth armed with clubs and stones fought them back, until police intervened. On March 24, a repetition of last December's "March of the Empty Pots" was scheduled. This so-called "march of women" against the Allende government was to end, as did the last march, in street attacks by armed rightist bands, who would have gone on to create a night of terror. Finally, five army units were to be moved into action.

Tanks and armored vehicles were to surround the presidential palace, the president's residence, and the jail which holds General Robert Viaux, leader of the failed 1969 coup attempt, linked by Jack Anderson to the CIA. After Allende was to have been taken prisoner and Viaux freed, all units were to be dispatched to take and control the streets of Santiago, while leading leftists and all communication centers were seized.

One retired general and two junior officers have been arrested in conjunction with the plot. The leader of "Fatherland and Liberty," briefly in custody, was released on less than \$84 bail by the courts.

At the last minute the government banned the "March of Women" to remove opportunities for provocation. On the day before the plot's scheduled culmination, 180,000 workers mobilized by the Central Labor Organization (CUT) filled the streets of Santiago to stop rightist conspiracy and support the government.

## Plot 'only postponed'

The publication of the conspirators' documents is believed to have deeply embarrassed some "respectable" figures implicated in the plot. However, the largest pro-government newspaper, Clarin, has asserted that the plan has been only postponed, not cancelled. The Christian Democrats have made a third bid for a mass march on April 12, now to be called "March for Democracy."

The PDC's proposed route passes the newly constructed building for the upcoming conference of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) named in the conspirators' documents as the site for a bloody attack on traditional leftist construction workers, who would be made to look responsible for the incident. During the last rightist march, rioters attempted to burn the building down but were beaten back by workers. The scheduling and proposed route of this march have been denounced as a deliberate provocation by the UP, and although the PDC has been granted a permit, the government has announced that the route must be changed.

Also last week, Chile's attempt to renegotiate its foreign debt with 16 capitalist nations collectively known as the Paris Club took a turn for the worse when the club, under U.S. leadership, turned down Chile's offered payment plan. Chile owes \$3.8 billion, making it the second most indebted nation in the world, and 60 per cent of that is owed to the U.S. In 1971 debt repayment and interest took 35 percent of the Chile's export income — 20 percent is usually considered the highest bearable rate by most

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