



## THE PRICE OF ORDER

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Resumen. El corresponsal de la Radio y Televisión suiza, Luc Banderet estaba en Santiago durante el golpe military de September 1973, que derrocó al gobierno constitucional de Salvador Allende Gossens. Tres meses más tarde, en diciembre del mismo año, regresa para ver qué cambios habían sido realizados por la nueva junta militar. Los cambios son sustantivos pero tienen un sangriento precio.

Swiss Correspondent Luc Banderet was in Santiago during the September´73 coup that overthrew the constitutional government of Salvador Allende Gossens; at december´73 he returned to see what changes had been made by the new military junta. His report:

Signs of change begin at Santiago's Pudahuel airport. There are taxis now. In the chaotic days before the coup, just getting to town took a feat of near legerdemain, since cab drivers, like many other businessmen, were on strike against Allende's plans to nationalize many sectors of the economy, including transportation. Another obvious change: the multicolored graffiti that turned the walls of Santiago's buildings into checkered political billboards have been whitewashed by junta order.

In bars where journalists, politicians and diplomats used to meet and chat, the leftist hangers-on and exiles are gone. Most of them have been expelled from the country, are under arrest or are languishing in embassies and "safe havens" to avoid prison.



The most promising change has taken place in Chile's economy, which Allende left a shambles. After the coup, the fierce General Gustavo Leigh Guzman, chief of the air force and a junta member, prescribed a Spartan program of "work, work, and work." It has resulted. The copper industry, which accounts for 80% of Chile's foreign earnings, had been nationalized, poorly managed, and so raven with strikes that production plummeted. But under the Military Junta copper production rose to 61,000 tons during October, compared with a monthly average of less than 50,000 tons during Allende's last months in office. With food prices up by 300%, the conservative's farmers are again tilling their land. Increased crops will reduce by nearly \$100 million the need for the huge food imports (some \$700 million) ordered by Allende.

In November, the government announced that 115 companies that had been nationalized by Allende would be returned to their former owners. The junta also said it was willing to discuss compensation for the U.S. copper mines, with assets of \$500 to \$700 million that were taken over by Allende. All this has raised the government's stock in the eyes of foreign investors. American banks have offered Chile short-term loans of \$ 150 million. Canadian, British and German banks are negotiating similar arrangements. By contrast, practically no foreign credit was available to Allende during his last month.

The bright signs are counterbalanced by harsh decrees. The removal of Allende's subsidization of many consumer items has caused prices to soar so high that few shoppers can afford to buy. Though wages have risen 70% under the junta, the cost of living has jumped 120%. Bread is up 350%, cooking oil 400%, gasoline 700%. Many poor Chileans are going hungry.

There is still a depressing mood of fear in Chile. Armed troops patrol Santiago's streets, and gunfire is frequently heard at night. Most observers now believe that



the death toll is around 2,000, not 675 as the junta claims. Executions continue, though indiscriminate killings apparently have not ceased. Around the country, several thousand political leftists are still being held in military prisons without trial. Political parties have been banned, and the Military Junta indicates that the earliest it might allow elections would be in two years.

Meanwhile, Santiago's provincial military boss has issued "Bando 28" (Order 28), forbidding "elections of any kind in union, guild, political, student or any other kind of group." Vacancies will be filled by the military. The draconian measure led one Santiago and to wonder wryly whether the order applied "to the local football club too." The constitution was recently amended so that Chileans who criticize the government while traveling abroad will automatically lose their citizenship.

Santiago's raucous night life has been snuffed out by an 11 p.m.-5:30 a.m. curfew. Restaurants other than those in tourist hotels no longer serve dinner. "Bando 28" bans all gatherings during curfew hours, thus thwarting attempts by fun lovers to get around the curfew by holding their parties from dark to dawn.

Despite all this, Chileans, if they had the choice, would probably reluctantly vote for the Military Junta as the lesser of evils. Though the Junta is hardly popular, it does have the country running again. Chileans middle classes chafe under its totalitarian restrictions, but they also remember the chaos and strife of Allende's regime. For the moment Chile's citizens appear content to get back to work and the rhythms of an orderly society. But with their long democratic tradition, they are not likely to tolerate Military Junta rule indefinitely.