

set at liberty. Two members of the Cabinet, the Ministers of the Interior and of Agriculture, were placed under arrest.

Meanwhile, General Ramirez had been given a rousing welcome on his entry into Government House on the afternoon of the 4th; it was, however, General Rawson, who had, by the late afternoon, assumed command of the provisional Government, issued a proclamation stating that the *coup d'état* had been prepared inside the army, was entirely Argentine and completely non-political, and sent to inform His Majesty's Minister that the new Government would be constituted within the framework of the Argentine Constitution and in conformity with democratic principles. Assisted by General Ramirez and Admiral Sueyro, he remained at the head of the Provisional Government till the early hours of the 7th June. Martial law was proclaimed; Congress dissolved; and a Cabinet appointed consisting (besides General Rawson as President and General Ramirez as Minister of War) of three generals, three admirals and two civilians. The two latter, however, resigned early on the morning of the 7th June and General Rawson then announced his own resignation, leaving the Government in the hands of General Ramirez. The latter appointed a Cabinet consisting of four naval and four military officers, together with one civilian, Dr. Santamarina, the President of the National Bank, as Minister of Finance, and the new provisional Government took the oath of allegiance to the Constitution the same evening.

These are the bare outlines of the events between the 4th and 8th June. It is clear that the *coup d'état* took the politicians, both on the Government side, and on the side of the Radical and Socialist Opposition, almost completely by surprise, though rumours circulated 48 hours before it began. General Ramirez would appear to have been the brains of the movement, and the revolt was timed to coincide with, or rather to forestall, the nomination of President Castillo's candidate for the Presidency, Sr. Patrón Costas, by the party convention of the National Democratic Party. In their proclamations the military leaders emphasised the "corruption and fraudulence" of the Government, and the need for loyal collaboration with American nations and the fulfilment of international pacts and obligations—a phrase which hinted at an intention to break with the Axis in conformity with the recommendations of the Rio de Janeiro Conference of 1942. General Ramirez, moreover, has been profuse in his expressions of loyalty to democracy and friendliness to Great Britain.

Nevertheless early Press accounts of the democratic nature of the *coup* were somewhat wide of the mark. The late Argentine Government was unpopular with liberal and left-wing opinion; it was also unpopular with the extreme nationalists. There were attempted army revolts in September 1941, and again in September 1942; and the Army (which contains ultra-nationalist elements) has been growing increasingly uneasy at the effect on Argentine defences of the flow of lease-lend supplies from the United States to Brazil, Chile and Paraguay. This, no doubt, was the occasion of the revolt, and if the apprehension is to be removed, it means that Argentina must break with the Axis.

If this interpretation is correct, the Generals were not prepared to wait for an evolution in Argentine policy which has been foreshadowed, but which, from the military point of view, might well come too late. They could count on a good deal of popular acquiescence if not positive support. But the *coup d'état* was essentially military and the Cabinet which General Rawson constituted, though unimpressive, was essentially and strongly nationalistic. At least four members of it (including General Rawson himself and the Police Chief of Buenos Aires, who was appointed Foreign Minister) are known to have had connexion with one of the notorious of Argentina's near-Fascists, General Molina; and of these the Finance Minister, Sr. J. M. Rosa, had given his support to extreme nationalist organisations. The printing works which he owned had the distinction, moreover, of being on the British Statutory List. It is, of course, quite possible to combine a policy of reaction at home with a pro-Allied policy abroad. By reason of the character of some of the leaders of the *coup*, the dissolution of Congress, and the arrest of the staff of the Communist paper, *La Hora*, Argentines, quite apart from a sense of wounded vanity at so purely militaristic a movement, had cause to regard these developments with much concern. From the standpoint of the United Nations, moreover, the prolongation of a military dictatorship, with its attendant political instability and the risk of adverse effects on Argentine production of food and strategic materials for the United Nations, might well prove an unduly high price to pay for the convenience of an Argentine rupture with the Axis.

It may well be that the *coup d'état* of the 4th June was an example of a familiar alliance of divergent elements (represented by General Rawson and General Ramirez respectively) to achieve an immediate common end. The split in General Rawson's Government, of which the appointment of Sr. Rosa was certainly one cause, would seem to support this view, and General Ramirez's Cabinet besides eliminating Sr. Rosa and General Rawson himself, eliminated also the Chief of Police and one other suspected friend of General Molina. The appointment of Sr. Santamarina, moreover, as Minister of Finance is a welcome sign. General Ramirez's Cabinet, however, is not noted for its distinction, and both its probable survival and its possible intentions as yet remain a matter of doubt. For the moment President Ramirez has affirmed a policy of friendship and loyal co-operation with the nations of America, together with a provisional neutrality towards the remainder of the world. It is unlikely that British and United States recognition of his Government will be long delayed.

Meanwhile the Argentine *coup* may have exacerbated the delicate situation in Chile, where the whole of the Cabinet resigned on the 7th. The renewal of the Minister of the Interior is likely to be a tranquillising factor; but President Rios has postponed his visit to the United States because he dare not risk leaving the country. He is, however, confident of controlling the situation; and the inclusion of the pro-Allied Commanders-in-Chief of the Army and Navy in the new Cabinet indicates an intention of forming a strong Government.