

BOLIVIA PRESIDENT KILLED IN UPRISING; NEW REGIME FORMS

Dictator Villarroel Is Pitched From Balcony While Wounded —Body Hung on Lamppost

REBELLION RAGED A WEEK

Provisional Junta Takes Reins in La Paz—Leftist Trend Is Expected in Government

By The United Press.

LA PAZ, Bolivia, July 21—President Gualberto Villarroel was killed today and his body suspended from a lamppost in a public square as a revolutionary regime was swept into power in a bloody culmination to the week-long revolt by students and workers.

Major Villarroel had been badly wounded in a bitter battle when the rebels stormed the Presidential Palace. His body was one of the first found when the students and workers swarmed into the palace.

The young revolutionists seized President Villarroel, who was still alive, and hurled him from a balcony. He fell to the street at the feet of other rebels, dying instantly from his wounds and the fall. The revolutionists then hung the body from a lamppost in the plaza facing the palace.

Provisional Regime Formed

Tonight the rebels announced the formation of a Provisional Government headed by Nestor Guillen, dean of the Supreme Court for the La Paz District. Other members, to be announced later, will include representatives of the University of La Paz students, the faculty, and the Federation of Labor syndicates.

The new Government also announced it would call general elections for Bolivia, which had lived under the virtual dictatorship of Major Villarroel.

Although the rebels appeared strongly entrenched tonight, they were taking no chances against a counter-revolt. This capital still resembled a fortress with strongly-armed rebels patrolling the streets.

Political Prisoners Released

The rebels liberated all political prisoners when they stormed the public jail and killed Major Villarroel's chief of transport, Maj. Max Toledo.

The climactic phase of the revolt began this morning when thousands of people began to swarm into the streets. Some of them were armed. Others acquired guns when they captured arsenals in the City Hall and at the municipal transport headquarters.

Fighting broke out in various parts of the city. The biggest battle was at the Presidential Palace, where Major Villarroel and a handful of his followers defended the building until borne under by the sheer weight of numbers and firepower.

Even as President Villarroel was killed, an airplane with its motor running waited at the airport to fly him to Chile. But the street barricades set up by rebellious students and workers cut off his escape.

A still unknown number of the President's followers were killed or wounded with him in the palace battle. Major Villarroel's military aide, Capt. Waco Ballvian, his paymaster and a palace secretary also were killed.

Members of the Supreme Court, the principal of the National University, and student and labor leaders met to name a provisional Government.

President and Aides Fight Back

They invited Thomas Monje Gutiérrez, President of the Supreme Court for the La Paz District, to assume the Presidency. However, he declined because of ill health.

When the rebels stormed toward the palace the Minister of Education tried frantically by short-wave radio to call enough automobiles for an attempt to crash through the barricades to the airport.

But the cars did not arrive. The rebels, armed with guns and grenades, opened their attack. Major Villarroel and his aides fought back furiously, but they were outnumbered and outgunned. Finally the shooting from the palace was stilled and the revolutionists stormed into the building.

Major Villarroel's plane still waited at the El Alto airport on a plain above the city. He had planned to fly to Arica, Chile.

At midday, Major Villarroel announced he had resigned and turned over the Government to

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Gen. Damaso Arenas, commander in chief of the Army, but the fighting continued into the afternoon.

Major Villarroel lost power the same way he himself had taken over in December, 1943, when he led a military coup that ousted President Enrique Peñaranda.

Major Villarroel made a last attempt to save his tottering regime last night when he formed a military Government.

330 Casualties in Revolt

Authoritative sources indicated that the Army had deserted President Villarroel at the last minute.

According to unofficial reports, more than 330 persons were killed or wounded during the revolt.

The previous attempt to unseat Major Villarroel was made on June 13. The coup failed after skirmishes in which several were killed and wounded.

Students from the University of La Paz were considered the real heroes of the revolution. Their revolt actually began on July 9, when they joined their teachers in a strike. The students held mass meetings and demonstrations throughout the city.

Army troops fired on a crowd of students in the Plaza Murillo, and a short but bitter battle followed. Three students were reported killed.

Last Thursday and Friday, the students went into the streets again to demonstrate. This time they had the backing of the Workers' Federation, which called a general strike.

The students fought with rifles and pistols against the superior equipment of the Government troops. Early Friday, the students were forced to surrender the university building, but they continued their fight until today's decisive engagement.

No U. S. Citizens Injured

WASHINGTON, July 21 (U.P.)—The State Department said tonight that initial reports from La Paz indicated that no American had been injured in the revolt that swept the Bolivian regime of President Villarroel from power.

A spokesman said "fragmentary" reports from official United States sources in Bolivia revealed that President Villarroel and several members of his Cabinet had been assassinated.

Villarroel a Chaco War Hero

President Villarroel, known principally heretofore for his services as an officer in the Gran Chaco war between his country and Paraguay, became head of the Government of Bolivia on Dec. 20, 1943, when a revolution in La Paz deposed his predecessor, President Peñaranda.

Ruling at first as head of a nine-man junta, Villarroel, then an Army major, sought to reassure his countrymen that the revolution had been undertaken solely in the interest of economic and political reforms at home, and said that Bolivia would continue as a member of the Allies.

Suspicion that the movement had been backed largely by pro-Axis forces grew rapidly, however, and it was not until June, 1944, that the new Government was recognized by the United States and Great Britain. Meanwhile, persons regarded as pro-Axis had been forced out of the Government



Gualberto Villarroel

Associated Press

and Major Villarroel had taken the title of acting president.

He became President in August, 1944, being elected by members of the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies over the protests of Bolivians who contended that the law required direct election of the Chief Executive. The Senate and the Chamber of Deputies had been elected at balloting carried out in comparative good order a month earlier.

Protests against the Villarroel regime continued throughout its existence, although it was conceded by the United States and by the other Latin-American republics, of which eighteen had opposed recognition, that Major Villarroel had earnestly endeavored to meet the objection of profascism raised against some of his followers.