

CHILE SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN
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Affiliates Newsletter No 5.
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Dear Colleagues,

Labour Party Conference:

1. Resolutions: The original conference agenda has been scrapped, with the result that the Vauxhall Labour Party's motion on Chile will probably not be raised. In fact almost the only way in which Chile can be raised at the Conference is via emergency resolutions. CSC believes that there is an issue which justifies such a resolution. The British Government in October signed an agreement with the military junta in Chile rescheduling the payments due to Britain on Chile's foreign debt. The agreement was on highly favourable terms to the junta, not least because the interest rate (7.5 per cent) is well below the international norm. Both the NEC of the Labour Party and the Socialist International had urged that no such agreement be reached without substantial conditions being imposed upon the junta for the restoration of human rights in Chile. There is no evidence that any conditions or strings were attached to the agreement. Yet at this moment Anselmo Sule, President of the Chilean Radical Party (sister-party to the Labour Party) is languishing in jail in Chile, having been re-arrested in September. He is accused of 'extremist' activities, and is reported to have been tortured. Among the many thousands of other prisoners is also President Allende's sister, Laura Allende, who was arrested at the beginning of November. She is 62 years old, and is suffering from terminal cancer. All the evidence is that the situation with regard to human rights in Chile is deteriorating even further.

These debt renegotiations allow the junta to postpone payments due -in other words they are tantamount to a new loan. The sums involved (about 52 million US dollars due to be paid to Britain in 1973-4) are very large, and many times greater than the comparatively paltry amount (£166,000) of direct aid which was cut off by order of the new Labour Government in March 1974.

How is the junta spending the money saved by not having to pay Britain back for a number of years? Principally on arms: the highest level of arms spending in Chilean history until 1973 was less than 2 per cent of Gross Domestic Product. For 1973 the junta plans to spend more than three times as much -7 per cent of Gross Domestic Product- according to a World Bank Report. Also, importantly, on paying compensation to the US copper companies (Kennecott, Anaconda and Cerro) for the nationalisation of their mines by the Allende government. President Allende calculated that these companies had reaped such excessive profits from their operations in Chile that no compensation was due to them. Now the junta is handing out largesse to them -253 million dollars to Anaconda alone.

Please consider these points, and if you are able to put in a resolution, do so. It is especially important, because these debt renegotiations are repeated annually, at the so-called Club of Paris talks. The next meeting is due before the end of 1974. Britain must not again fall into the trap of providing the junta with easy money to buy arms and to prostitute its nations' natural resources to the American giant corporations.

2. CHILE SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN MEETING AT THE LABOUR PARTY CONFERENCE.

Friday November 29. Alliance Hall, Palmer St (close to Central Hall) 7.30 p.m.
Chairman: Neil Kinnock, MP, (Chairman of the PLP Chile Group).
Speakers: Ian Mikardo MP, a leading trade unionist, and Brian Nicholson for the Campaign.

Annual General Meeting:

The first Annual General Meeting of the CSC will be held on Saturday December 14 at the Islaington South-East Library, Essex Road, London, from 11.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. A member of the Labour Party Chile group will be invited as guest speaker, and there will be a report direct from Chile, as well as the showing of a film, 'Chilean September'. The main item of business will be the Campaign programme for the coming year, as well as the more formal items -approval of accounts, election of officers, etc.

Each organisation affiliated to the national Chile Solidarity Campaign will be entitled to send one delegate. Only bona-fide delegates will be entitled to vote. Voting will be by card. Please see the attached leaflet for details. We particularly ask trade union affiliates to do their best to ensure that a delegate is appointed.

Resolution:

During the previous year the Campaign has circulated more than 10,000 copies of a 'Pledge of Solidarity with the People of Chile'. The Pledge contained very many points, and had the disadvantage of being too long to be read out at many meetings. Nevertheless a considerable number of organisations discussed and approved the pledge.

This year we have been asked by a number of affiliates to produce a shorter text which could serve as a pledge, for discussion, and as a basis for resolutions which could be framed and put through the appropriate bodies. Here is our text. It is framed for trade unionists, but student and other organisations could modify it for their own purposes:

RESOLUTION

We condemn the brutal military regime in Chile which overthrew Salvador Allende's Popular Unity Government in September 1973, and which has killed and continues to kill, torture and imprison thousands of Chilean trade unionists. We pledge our support to all those struggling against the junta in Chile and to the worldwide campaign to achieve its political and military isolation.

We call on fellow trade unionists to promote the following demands in their unions during the coming year:

1. That the Chilean junta immediately release all trade union and political prisoners, and restore trade union rights.
2. That the Labour government at once sever all trade and diplomatic relations with the junta.
3. That a boycott be instituted on all trade with Chile, excepting only such items as medicines.

Jack Jones going to Chile:

As mentioned in the last affiliates' newsletter, the ITF is sending a delegation to Chile to determine the conditions confronting brother trade unionists there. One of the members of the delegation will be Jack Jones, General Secretary of the Transport & General Workers Union. We believe that Jack will bring back a very

strong report, and we hope that it will receive ample publicity and be rapidly acted upon.

Prisoners: The Chile Committee for Human Rights is preparing material on the adoption of political prisoners by affiliate organisations. We already have a number of lists of prisoners, which we will break down by occupation, so that trade union and student organisations can select an individual case to follow. One word of caution: conditions of repression in Chile are so severe that we may not be able to do some of the things (writing letters to members of the family, etc) that have been done in the case of political prisoners in other countries --because of the dangers to other persons, relatives, etc. Please be careful not to exceed the instructions of the Chile Committee for Human Rights.

Christmas Campaign: At the request of the Chilean Exterior Coordinating Committee in Rome, The Chile Committee for Human Rights has begun a massive petition to obtain the signatures of British women to a petition on behalf of women and children who are political prisoners in Chile. You will receive a separate mailing on this.

News from Chile: The repression seems to be getting worse than ever, but there are signs of increasing worry on the part of the junta about the resistance organisations and about disaffection within the ranks of the armed forces. Junta newspapers now frequently complain about the 'extremist' publications -pamphlets and leaflets- which now circulate everywhere in Chile. Meanwhile at least 7 generals have been 'invited to retire' since September 1974, and apparently more than 150 high-ranking officers are to share the same fate. This is only the most recent of many purges.

Both the MIR and the Communist Party have lost a number of important leaders in the past two months, but both assure us that their organisations are still intact and will carry on the struggle come what may.

Three important resistance leaders who were captured at different times earlier this year, and at first believed dead, are now definitely known to be still alive, although horribly tortured. Bautista Van Schowen, a doctor, 30 years old, and member of the Political Commission of the MIR, was captured last December. He was seen most recently in the Military Hospital in Santiago, his body so wrecked by torture that he had a plaster cast from the waist to the feet, covering both legs. Gustavo Ruz, a student leader and prominent member of the Chilean Socialist Party, was captured in March. He also has been seen alive. Finally, Jorge Montes, former Senator for Concepcion, member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, by profession a school-teacher, was captured during a raid in August. He has been horribly beaten -one leg is paralysed, all his teeth have been wrenched out, and his ear-drums shattered. With him in prison are his wife and two daughters, all of whom have been tortured.

News of other prisoners reaches us almost daily.

Despite the repression, the outlook for the junta is pretty glum. Foreign investment, upon which they are depending, is simply not arriving, and inflation, after slowing down in June and July, is now again running at 20 per cent per month. Any action we can take will help to weaken them further.

Yours sincerely,

MIKE GATEHOUSE, Joint Secretary.