

SOCIALISM IN DANGER



THE PROBLEM

"Chile is the Britain of Latin America", it is often said. How many in Britain know that for the last 2½ years the Chilean government has tried to lead the country peacefully towards socialism? The Radicals, the Socialists, the Communists and the Social Democrats joined forces to win the Chilean Presidential election in 1970 for Salvador Allende.

Our road (to socialism) is much more difficult because it is within the limits of law and the constitution. We don't expect to achieve socialism overnight.
Salvador Allende, 30 January 1971

The next Presidential election is 3½ years away, but Allende's government is having to fight daily for survival. That it survives until now testifies to the courage of the Chilean working class and to the strength of its labour movement. The vital question is can socialism be achieved without a civil war, the Chilean way?

The formidable enemy consists of those who do not want Chile to serve all Chileans. The ruling classes in Chile (as in all Latin America) have profited greatly from their country's DEPENDENCE on the United States. In 1965, the upper 4 per cent of Chileans earned about 40 per cent of the total income. The greatest profits have been gained by the United States and multinational corporations.

Profits returned to the United States from Chile during the last 60 years exceed the total value of all capital accumulated in Chile over the last 400 years.

The US and the multinationals claim that aid, loans and private investment are helping Latin American countries to develop. What they do not explain is that the US economy needs cheap, raw materials and a market for their profit-making manufactured goods. Gradually the US has penetrated Latin America and used their power to ensure that Latin America provides the market they need. The growing indebtedness of Latin America to the US has been reinforced by US aid -- which in turn has intensified DEPENDENCY on the US.

90 per cent of Chile's foreign earnings still come from mineral exports, 80 per cent from copper. When Allende took office, Chile's foreign debt per person was the second highest in the world.

THE STRUGGLE

Allende's government is determined to break Chile's dependency on the US and the multinationals. It wants to ensure that all Chileans get a slice of the cake, not just the rich. An essential measure is NATIONALIZATION. Since Allende came to power, banks and key industries including copper have been nationalized.

Neither the US, nor the multinationals, nor the Chilean ruling class are going to accept this road without a fight. They have tried many ways to sabotage Allende's government.

INTERNAL AGGRESSION

1. Obstruction to government measures by managers, by members of Parliament (where the opposition has a majority), and by the judiciary.
2. The creation of artificial shortages by hoarding, thus creating a black market where the rich can afford to buy scarce goods at high prices.
3. Opposition papers and radio stations generating persistent scares and alarm. Recently a newspaper advertisement called upon the people not to obey the government.
4. Two important political assassinations and scores of other killings.
5. Strikes, demonstrations and an attempted military coup in June 1973.

FOREIGN AGGRESSION

6. Attempts to bring about a military coup when Allende was elected in 1970. The valuable discovery of secret ITT (International Telephone and Telegraph Corporation) papers proves this:

The US Ambassador to Chile finally received the green light to move in the name of President Nixon. He was given maximum authority to do all possible - short of a Dominican Republic-type action -- to keep Allende from taking power.

ITT Papers, Spokesman Books, Nottingham 1972

7. A campaign in the courts by Kennecott Copper Corporation to prevent Chileans from selling copper in European markets.

8. This "invisible blockade" has been very effective in helping to create economic chaos in Chile, especially by making even commercial loans of a routine kind difficult to raise.

GOVERNMENT STRENGTH

The Chilean government is supported by the mass of workers who will not give up the struggle easily. Government supporters have increased since 1970 from 36 per cent to 43 per cent of all voters, despite obstruction by the opposition. Worker strength is not an overnight affair in Chile.

Chilean workers began to organize last century to fight the subhuman working conditions in mines. The first national federation was formed in 1911. By 1919, it had been taken over by militants. To counteract this growing force, trade union legislation in 1924 only recognized shop and professional trade unions. Yet workers ignored the attempts to limit their power and continued to form illegal federations as well. It was a great moment when the CUT (equivalent to the TUC) was founded in 1953. The CUT has been a major source of support for Allende's government in the struggle against internal and foreign aggression. It has finally been recognized legally.

At this very moment Allende's government is fighting a life or death battle. A transport strike has been crippling the country for more than one month, costing an estimated £2½ millions daily.

A CALL TO BRITISH WORKERS

The General Council of the TUC have shown their deep concern at the present situation in Chile by making a statement at their meeting on August 22, "expressing the support of the British trade union movement for the democratically elected Popular Unity Government of Chile, and for the Chilean trade unions in their resistance to attempts to overthrow that government." The British Labour Party have also issued a statement of support.

The fight against multinationals is not only a Chilean problem, but one that affects workers all over the world. WE IN THE BRITISH LABOUR MOVEMENT URGENTLY CALL UPON BRITISH WORKERS TO EXPRESS THEIR SOLIDARITY WITH CHILEAN WORKERS IN THEIR STRUGGLE TO ESTABLISH DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISM.

SIGNED:

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| +BILL SIMPSON
Chairman, Labour Party | ^JOE CRAWFORD (President of the TUC)
Gen.Sec., Nat.Assoc. of Colliery Overmen,
Deputies and Shotfirers |
| +RON HAYWARD
Gen.Sec., Labour Party | ^LESLIE BUCK
Gen.Sec., Nat.Union of Sheet Metal
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| +JUDITH HART, M.P. | ^LAWRENCE DALY
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+Members of the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party.

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