

T R A D E S U N I O N C O N G R E S S

CONFERENCE ON CHILE

1. Eighty-three representatives from thirty-five affiliated organisations attended the TUC Conference on Chile on April 24. Representatives from the Chilean national trade union centre CUT also attended including Mr. Luis Figueroa, the President, Mr. Raul Caro, member of the CUT Executive Committee and of the Chilean Telecommunications Union, and Mr. Humberto Elgueta, member of the CUT Executive Committee and of the Chilean Teachers' Union. Mr. J.L. Jones took the chair.
2. The chairman outlined action taken by the General Council since the coup in Chile in September 1973, and drew attention to an interim report of an ILO Fact Finding and Conciliation Commission on Chile, and to a report prepared by the CUT concerning the political and economic position in Chile, the activities of Chilean trade unionists, and international reactions to the Chilean situation.
3. The President of the CUT drew attention to the policies of economic and physical repression followed by the Chilean regime and pointed out that all trade union rights had been suspended but that nevertheless workers in Chile were resisting, for example, by taking part in various forms of industrial action, including strikes. He stated that opposition to the regime existed throughout Chile and that the isolation of the regime within and from outside Chile would bring about its downfall.
4. A representative of the National Union of Mineworkers expressed the view that the same forces which worked against the interests of working people and which had taken over Chile, were also active in Britain and particularly in Northern Ireland, and that resolute action should be taken against them.
5. A representative of the Transport and General Workers' Union stated that the US Central Intelligence Agency and multinational companies had contributed to the fall of the Popular Unity Government of Chile. He pointed out that in contrast to the previous Conservative Government, the Labour Government had taken positive action with regards to Chile, which had led to the cancellation of the Paris Club meeting and to a reappraisal by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund of their attitude to Chile. It was to be noted, however, that the Civil Service in Britain had not always been helpful. More action was needed and in particular the TUC should try to persuade the AFL-CIO to take a more militant attitude. Trade unions should also provide funds more freely, especially to the Chile Solidarity Campaign.
6. A representative of the AUEW (Engineering Section) pointed out that the Conference of his organisation had before it a resolution asking for a rupture of diplomatic relations with Chile, a boycott of all trade to and from Chile, the expulsion of Chile from the United Nations, and the insistence by the British Government that Chile

should repay immediately all debts to this country. He recalled that the Executive Council of his union had instructed their members to cease work on various products destined for Chile but that the response had not been as strong as had been hoped. What was required was united action on the part of all trade unionists in support of the request of the CUT for an increased isolation of the regime, the development of an economic blockade and of a boycott of Chile, and the stepping up of actions of solidarity with the Chilean people.

7. A representative of APEX drew attention to the needs of Chilean refugees in Britain and stated that while there was trade union unity in Britain, there was a need for unity on a world scale.

8. A representative of the National Union of Seamen recalled that in the case of Rhodesia sanctions had not been fully effective because a number of countries had disregarded the embargo, and he stated that his union would be prepared to tell their members not to handle cargo to and from Britain, but that to be effective international action was required. He asked that the International Transport Federation should consider urgently the question of a boycott of Chile.

9. A representative of the National Union of Mineworkers stated that the ILO report had not covered the question of CIA intervention in Chile. He asked that the ILO, together with the TUC and the Labour Party should denounce CIA activities in Chile and that CIA personnel should be expelled from Britain, and he expressed his fear that the CIA might intervene in Portugal.

10. A representative of USDAW expressed the view that women were as concerned as men at the situation in Chile although few women were present at the Conference, and she pointed out that the Conference of her union, which represented a large number of women workers, had adopted unanimously a resolution denouncing the sale of arms to the Chilean regime, asking for diplomatic relations to be broken off, and asking the British Government to practice policies in line with the aspirations of the Chilean people.

11. A representative of the Bakers' Union stated that the Chilean regime should be destroyed by any means as soon as possible.

12. A representative of the T&GWU drew attention to CIA activities in Latin America and to alleged CIA penetration of International Trade Secretariats which should be looked at carefully.

13. A representative of SLADE commended a scheme whereby Chilean refugees could be sponsored by outside organisations. He expressed concern at the actions of the Argentine Government who, it was alleged, were harassing refugees from Chile.

14. A representative of the ASTMS asked the General Council to remain vigilant in their opposition to any

financial assistance to the Chilean regime, he asked that unions concerned with the P & O Line to Chile from Liverpool might study together the question of the transport of military equipment to Chile, suggesting that the TUC might get in touch with all the unions concerned, and he urged support for the view that there should be a nationally co-ordinated policy to prevent the maintenance and supply of parts for Hunter aircraft belonging to the Chilean airforce.

15. A representative of the Confederation of Health Service Employees stressed that the political wing of the British labour movement should seek to influence US policy with regards to Chile.

16. A representative of SOGAT asked the General Council to initiate immediately a campaign to bring the situation in Chile to the attention of working people in Britain.

17. A representative of the T&GWU stated that it would be preferable for goods for Chile not to be produced rather than to rely solely on transport workers to blockade Chile.

18. A representative of the ATTI stated that the last conference of his organisation had adopted a resolution condemning the destruction of the Chilean system of education, showing the strength of feeling on the issue as no resolution on a topic of this kind had been adopted since the Spanish civil war.

19. A representative of the ASTMS stated that his organisation had agreed to take what action it could to stop goods produced for Chile.

20. In concluding the chairman stated that it was proposed that the General Council should donate a further £1,000 to the CUT, and he pointed out that further financial assistance was required by the CUT and by the Chile Solidarity Campaign.

21. The chairman stated that many references to the need for action had been made during the course of the discussion and he expressed the view that a first step would be for participants in the conference to report back to their unions and to make Chile an item of priority for discussion. Direct action required to be strengthened but boycotts and refusals to handle or to produce goods for Chile were not easy to achieve. The ITF had organised a two-day boycott, in which some US unions had taken part, and further action might be decided upon, but it was a matter for the ITF and its affiliated unions rather than for the conference. There was a need for more publicity on the issue and it might be possible for Trades Councils to call meetings on the subject.

22. The General Council were responsible for making representations to the Government but it was also up to unions, which were affiliated to the Labour Party, to take action. Members of the Government took the

same view as unions on the question of Chile but in some cases the Civil Service resisted progressive attitudes so that representations were necessary, including representations concerning the CIA. The General Council would continue to give attention to activities of the CIA and would continue to expose open and concealed sources of support for the Chilean regime.

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