

CHILE SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN,
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Affiliates' Newsletter No.12
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Dear Colleagues,

TRADE UNION CONFERENCE

The Campaign's trade union conference, held at the University of London Union, on Saturday October 25th, proved to be an unprecedented success.

455 delegates attended, from 31 different unions, of which 17 were represented officially at national executive level. 4 T&GWU regions and 15 branches; 14 AUEW District Committees and 24 branches; 3 NUM areas; 35 trades councils; Yarrows, Rolls Royce (Combine) and Rolls Royce (East Kilbryde), Magnatex, and British Leyland (Comine) shop stewards committees, among others; 20 ATTI, 34 NALGO and 18 ASTMS branches; 5 EEPTU, and 4 NUR branches, and 2 NUR DCs.

The declaration, of which a copy is attached, was unanimously approved. Delegates heard Luis Figueroa, President of the Central Unica de Trabajadores (CUT), the Chilean TUC, thank the British trade union movement for its solidarity and outline the continuing need for supportive action, especially boycott.

A full report of the conference, including the texts of the major speeches, is being prepared. The text of Figueroa's final speech is included with this letter.

Write to us to indicate how many copies of the conference report you could distribute. The cost will be about 25p per copy.

ADOPTION OF PRISONERS

One of the most successful sections of the conference dealt with adoption of prisoners. Several NALGO branches and Trades Councils related their experiences. They had written letters to the prisoner they had adopted, to his/her family, and to the authorities in Chile. Three had been successful in obtaining the freedom of their 'adopted' trade unionist. One delegate told the conference, to loud applause, that he had had a pint the night before in London, with the prisoner his organisation had adopted.

For details of how to adopt a Chilean trade union prisoner, write to Chile Committee for Human Rights, 95 St. Paul's Road, London N1. Tel: 01-226-1545

THE SEAMEN'S BOYCOTT

Joe Kenny, speaking for the Liverpool Seamen at the conference, and as a member of his union's national executive council, appealed to trade unionists to support the conference declaration, and especially the call to the British labour movement to "give every possible support to the initiative of the executive council of the National Union of Seamen in calling for a boycott of British ships sailing to or from Chile". He indicated that his members in Liverpool were supporting this position, despite the fact that 600 of them were at present unemployed.

Resolutions of support for the National Union of Seamen should be sent to their head office (Maritime House, Old Town, Clapham, London SW4) and to individual seamen's branches in your area, especially Liverpool, which is the port most affected. Please send copies to CSC also. Resolutions do help. But we also need back-up blacking action by unions involved in the transport or production of goods which are carried on the ships the seamen are blacking.

THE DEBT AND THE SUBMARINES

Chile's Finance Minister, Jorge Cauas, announced last Friday that the Junta will definitely not pay Britain more than 10% of debt repayments outstanding this year. He explained this by saying that although Britain had refused to renegotiate Chile's debts, and therefore would not accept postponement of payments, other countries (France, Canada, the USA, West Germany, etc) had agreed to renegotiate. Chile could not 'give Britain more favourable treatment', by paying the full amount.

But the Junta cannot be allowed to get away with this. Our government refused (quite correctly) to allow postponement of the debt repayments. It must now insist upon payment, and if payment is not made, must proceed to take sanctions, by impounding Chilean assets in Britain. Especially we should impound the submarines and jet engines which are destined for the Chilean armed forces.

If the British Government fails to take such action, then it is tacitly admitting that the refusal to renegotiate Chile's debts was a mere propaganda exercise. Because, if the Junta gets away with paying only 10%, then we are de facto accepting renegotiation.

Resolutions should be sent urgently to Dennis Healey demanding that Britain exact payment of Chile's debts, and if payment is not made, that we proceed to impound Chilean assets in Britain, especially the submarines and aero engines. Write to your MP about the same topic.

THE UNITED NATIONS

Chile is at present being debated by UN committees, prior to a debate in the General Assembly. It is reported that Britain is supporting a resolution proposed by Belgium, which, if approved, would be hailed as a victory by the Chilean Junta. The resolution condemns the violations of human rights, and the refusal by the Junta to admit a UN investigating team. But it goes on to claim, against the weight of all the evidence, that the Junta has partially implemented the demands made by the UN last year, by releasing prisoners, and transferring cases from military to civil jurisdiction.

The CSC trade union conference sent a special message to Jim Callaghan, urging that Britain must support energetic condemnations of Chile at the UN, and should press for the application of economic sanctions and an arms embargo.

CSC is NOT, however, asking for the expulsion or suspension of Chile from the UN.

Write and send resolutions to MPs and to Jim Callaghan, urging a tough British line on Chile at the UN: outright condemnation of the Junta for violations of Human Rights; application of economic sanctions; an embargo on sales of arms to the Junta by member states.

CAMPAIGN PROGRAMME AND AGM

We will now be discussing a programme of activity for the coming months. In particular, we hope to develop a mass-campaign to collect food, clothing, medicine, etc, to be sent to the victims of the repression in Chile. A good deal of work has to be done on the details of this, and to ensure that what is sent will reach the right hands in Chile. In particular, if we can support the organisations in Chile which are working at neighbourhood level with the Children, the unemployed and the families of prisoners, then we will be supporting the only kind of open mass activity at present possible in Chile, and indirectly we will be supporting the resistance.

At some time next year, the Campaign will most probably call a national demonstration. We also hope to follow up this year's very successful concert at the Albert Hall, with something bigger and better in 1976.

The long-range parts of the programme will be discussed at the CSC AGM which will be held in late January.

Please write to us with your suggestions.

RE-AFFILIATION

A number of affiliations have expired, so that we will be writing to these organisations and individuals asking them to re-affiliate. The fees, unfortunately have had to be raised, to cope with inflation (especially in postage and printing costs) which is hitting us very hard.

NEW AFFILIATES

Five more national unions have affiliated to CSC in the past two months. They are G&MWU, NUSeamen, NUGSAT, FTAT, and NUTGW. This brings to 19 the number of national unions affiliated to the campaign. Their total membership exceeds 5.8 million.

SUPPORT FOR CHILE COMMITTEE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

Although the Campaign also is in financial difficulties, we are appealing for support not only for ourselves, but for the Chile committee for Human Rights. This organisation works closely with the CSC, and does excellent and important work. In particular they are in charge of the Adoption of Prisoners Scheme. Your support will help to ensure that CCHR are able to continue their work. You can help them by donating (their fund is a registered charity), by supporting the Adoption of Prisoners campaign with funds as well as adoptions, and by ordering copies of their reports on conditions in Chile.

Write to Chile Committee for Human Rights, 95 St. Paul's Road, London N.1

EVENTS IN CHILE

Having released a number of Popular Unity leaders, including Anibal Palma, the Radical Party leader and former Minister of Education, on September 11, the Junta promptly had them re-arrested by Naval Intelligence on the following day. Now these men, together with Luis Corvalan and others, have been put on trial together with loyal members of the Navy who refused to take part in the coup. The trial is taking place in Valparaiso, and the prisoners are in the hands of a naval officer who is particularly renowned for his brutality and use of torture.

Luis Corvalan has received the terrible news of the sudden death of his son Luis Alberto. Luis Alberto was imprisoned in the National Stadium in Santiago and terribly tortured. A Red Cross photographer took photographs of his body which was covered in cigarette burns and bruises from head to foot. Later he was transferred to the Chacabuco concentration camp, and eventually released on condition he left Chile. Since his escape he has been in various countries, speaking on behalf of his people. Joan Jara, the widow of folk-singer Victor Jara, was with him in Sofia shortly before his death. She says that his spirit and dedication to the cause of Chile were exemplary. Although he was deeply concerned about the fate of his father, who remains in prison, he always insisted that campaigns should be about all the prisoners in Chile, and not only the most well-known. He died suddenly of a heart-attack, almost certainly as a result of the terrible experiences he endured while in prison, and possibly as a result of

a blow to the chest administered by one of the Junta's torturers, which knocked him unconscious at the time.

The August edition of TRADE UNION REPORT -a semi-clandestine news-sheet which is circulating in Chile, states that the Chilean trade unionists are still being subjected to the most varied forms of persecution. "Dozens of trade union leaders and workers have been detained recently, among them 7 leaders and 4 workers from the El Salvador, Potrerillos and LLanta mines, who were sent to prison communities and dismissed from their jobs; 10 workers from the Paipote Foundry in Copiapo who were imprisoned on charges of sabotage because they refused to work over-time unless they were paid for it; the President of the Building Workers, Hector Cuevas, of the Municipal Workers, Jose Moyo, of the Textile Workers, Fernando Bobadilla, the national officer of the Mineworkers' Federation Juan Castillo, etc".

In September, the evening newspaper of Santiago, La Segunda, published what appeared to be a poem in praise of the military. Perceptive readers noticed, however, that if you read downwards the first letters of each line formed the message "MILITARY ASSASSINS AND MURDERERS". There was a major scandal, and the editor of the newspaper (which is a firm supporter of the Junta) was arrested.

CONCLUSION

The Chile Solidarity Campaign is stronger than ever. Our trade union conference shows not only the enormous degree of support we enjoy, but the fact that after two years, support is not declining. But as always, we remain dependent upon our affiliates for support, finance, suggestions and active participation. The people of Spain, after suffering nearly 40 years of fascism, are about to be rid of Franco. Let us ensure by our work that the people of Chile won't have to put up with Pinochet for that long.

Yours sincerely,

MIKE GATEHOUSE,
Joint Secretary.