

CHILE SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN  
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Affiliates Newsletter No 6.  
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Dear Colleagues,

The Foreign Debt:

At the Labour Party Conference in November, the following resolution was approved unanimously:

This Conference is appalled at the decision to allow the Chilean Government until 1983 to repay £24 million of its £124 million debt to the British Government, which is tantamount to a large new loan at the very modest interest rate of  $7\frac{1}{2}\%$ . We call on the N.E.C. to enquire into this decision of the Ministers at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office; to refuse to condone this action, to press the Government to revoke this decision, and to oppose any further renegotiation of the remaining £99 million debt until full civil and political rights are restored to all Chilean citizens.

We are particularly delighted with this success, since it is a matter on which we have been campaigning for the past ten months. The motion was proposed and seconded by Labour Party wards affiliated to the Campaign, and much of the discussion was based on information supplied by us.

However, we cannot be satisfied until the Government has adopted the policy urged upon it in the resolution. We already know that both the Foreign Office and the Treasury were considerably annoyed by the resolution, and that they are seeking a way of 'appearing' to implement it without actually doing so.

THIS IS PROBABLY THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE ON WHICH WE CAN CONTRIBUTE TO THE DOWNFALL OF THE JUNTA, AND THE RESTORATION OF DEMOCRACY IN CHILE.

The junta is in very very serious economic straits. It desperately needs to obtain new loans, new investment and renegotiation of its foreign debts. Its survival in power depends on this. If Britain gives the junta the 'easy terms' it is looking for, instead of paying us £13 million next year, it will pay next to nothing. This sum of money is far more important than the comparatively trifling sum of direct aid which was cut off by the Labour government last March. We must act to prevent the junta from obtaining what amounts to a low-interest loan of £13 million next year alone from Britain. They need this money to buy armaments and to pay their vastly inflated defence bills -- money, in other words to step up the repression of trade unionists and democrats.

Please act now. Contact your MP; pass a resolution at your trade union branch or trades council; press a motion in your local Labour Party:

THE GOVERNMENT MUST PROMISE NO RENEGOTIATION OF CHILE'S FOREIGN DEBT UNTIL FULL CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS ARE RESTORED TO ALL CHILEAN CITIZENS.

Boycotts really work:

We recently heard, on good authority, of a British fruit importer who went the rounds of Latin American embassies, looking for certain types of fruit his company is interested in importing. At one embassy they asked why he did not go to talk with the Chileans, since they had a



plentiful supply of what he wanted. His reply was that his company no longer contemplated trade with Chile, not for political reasons, but because they could not afford to take the risk that British dockers would refuse to unload the cargo and thus leave it to rot.

According to the Chilean newspapers, David Brown Tractors Ltd suddenly cancelled a contract to supply 45 agricultural tractors to Chile. The junta newspapers put this down to 'political motivations'. More probably, the company knew that its workers would refuse to dispatch the machines to Chile.

The junta is already politically isolated. Now it is increasingly threatened by economic isolation. If this occurs, it will fall, and, as President Allende said, "The wide avenues will be reopened, where free men can march to build a better society".

That is why Chile Solidarity Campaign urges:

NO AID, NO TRADE, NO LINKS WITH THE CHILEAN MILITARY JUNTA.

#### Trade Union Conference

At the Annual General Meeting of the CSC in December, it was agreed to work for the holding of a trade union conference on Chile. The success of such a conference is obviously dependent on securing real support for the idea from the trade union movement.

The aim is to bring together trade unionists from all over Britain who have been involved in solidarity work -- discussing Chile and passing resolutions in branches and committees; pressing for the release of political and trade union prisoners; canvassing MPs and pressing the Government for a firm policy on Chile; working locally to find housing, jobs, clothing, etc, for Chilean refugees; participating in pickets and demonstrations; and in boycott action. But also, we want to reach out much further, and involve more trade unionists than ever before in the work of Chile Solidarity.

We hope that such a conference would be attended by some of the leading Chilean trade unionists who have found exile in Europe. And we hope also that Jack Jones might speak at it, and report on his visit to Chile.

We have written to the national unions affiliated to the Campaign, to ask for their help and sponsorship. But we ask all affiliated organisations to assist by pressing for such a conference to be held, and by offering their own support.

A tentative date was set for the last week in March.

#### Annual General Meeting

Minutes of the Campaign AGM are enclosed, as well as a copy of the Campaign programme for the coming months, which was approved.

In the elections for Joint Secretary of the Campaign, Steve Hart of Liberation was replaced by Colin Henfrey of the Merseyside Chile Solidarity Campaign. Steve will continue to be associated with the



Campaign in his work with Liberation, but we extend our thanks to him for the very important work he performed in setting up and establishing the Campaign. Colin Henfrey brings a wealth of experience from the largest and most successful of the Campaign local committees, and the one which has the closest relations with the local labour movement.

#### Carmen Castillo

The efforts of millions of people throughout the world, of the CSC in Britain, and of the British labour movement, secured the release of Carmen Castillo, who arrived in Britain as a refugee. She had been seriously wounded in the arm and chest when junta soldiers attacked the house where she and Miguel Enriquez were staying. It was feared that her unborn child might be injured, but now the child (a boy) has been born. Mother and son are doing well.

#### Santiago Bell

Ever since the coup in Chile, Santiago Bell, a former provincial governor, has been in junta jails, including the notorious naval concentration camp at Quiriquina Island. Bell is the son of British parents, and has dual citizenship, but the British Embassy has made only half-hearted attempts to secure his release. His ~~xxx~~ four children arrived in England, and are being looked after by the Cambridge Chile Solidarity Committee. Bell is due to be tried by court martial on January 9. PLEASE PRESS THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT TO INSIST UPON THE IMMEDIATE RELEASE OF SANTIAGO BELL.

#### Other political prisoners

Laura Allende, Socialist, sister of the late President, and one of the best-known and best-loved democrats in Chile, is still in the clutches of the junta. A Habeas Corpus application on her ~~xxx~~ behalf was turned down. She is 62 years old, and is suffering from cancer.

A group of sailors who were arrested several months before the coup by the Naval Police for the crime of opposing the overthrow of constitutional government, is still under arrest, after suffering nearly 18 months of torture and interrogation. It is reported that the junta plans to try (and probably execute) them in secret.

Amnesty International tells us that they receive more and more reports of Chileans who simply vanish without trace. They are arrested in their homes during the hours of curfew by men in plain clothes who take them away in vehicles without license plates. They are never heard of again.

PRESS FOR THE RELEASE OF ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS NOW. URGE THE PRIME MINISTER TO INTERVENE ON BEHALF OF LAURA ALLENDE. WRITE TO NAVY MINISTER FRANK JUDD ABOUT THE IMPRISONED SAILORS.

#### News from Chile

The resolution overwhelmingly approved in the Assembly of the United Nations, which condemns the military junta in Chile, caused tremendous impact in Chile. For the first time a note of hysteria has entered into the junta's self-justifications. They now admit more or less freely that they are repudiated by every responsible organisation in the world. The final blow came with the publication of the report of the Human Rights Commission of the Organisation of American States. Usually, the power of



the United States within the O.A.S. has ensured bland treatment for repressive regimes like those of Brazil, Paraguay and Guatemala. But not even the OAS could fail to observe the gross and persistent violations of human rights in Chile.

At the same time the junta is failing economically. It sought to create a miracle on the Brazilian pattern (booming exports, and immense wealth for the few, while workers' wages decline in real terms). But this project has failed. World-wide recession, and the smallness and distant location of Chile make such dreams unrealistic. In January 1974, the junta promised to contain inflation to below 100 percent in 1974. According to official figures by December it had reached over 340 percent, and the real figure is probably much higher still.

More and more erstwhile opponents of Popular Unity are finding that life under the junta is worse than anything they ever dreamed of. The junta is helping to secure its complete political isolation by attacking those who might support it. A former Christian Democrat Deputy has been imprisoned, and two other Christian Democrat leaders have been expelled from the country. One of the leading conservative lawyers is to face trial for 'defaming the honourable junta', because he dared to suggest that human rights in Chile were being consistently violated.

The World Bank, on whose financial support the junta partially depends, recently issued a gloomy report on Chile's economic prospects, suggesting that inflation might reach 600 percent per year, and that unless the junta could obtain nearly 1,500 million dollars in loans, credits and postponed debt repayments in 1975, it would lose control of the economy altogether.

ALTHOUGH REPRESSION IN CHILE IS STRONGER THAN EVER, AT NO TIME HAS THE MILITARY JUNTA BEEN WEAKER THAN IT IS NOW. INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY MUST BE REDOUBLED. WITH OUR HELP THE CHILEAN PEOPLE CAN RESTORE THEIR FREEDOM.

Yours sincerely,

MIKE GATEHOUSE,  
Joint Secretary.