

# LABOUR PARTY CONFERENCE, 1973

## CHILE

### Statement by the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party on September 30, 1973

**T**HE overthrow by the armed forces of Chile of the freely elected government of "Popular Unity" is a major blow to those who seek to establish Socialism by democratic means.

Since its election in September 1970 the Popular Unity Government made genuine attempts to redistribute power and privilege within Chilean society in favour of the poor and the landless and to bring the resources of Chile, natural and economic under the control of the democratic Government on behalf of the people.

The response from vested interests, both inside and outside the country, was a systematic and calculated effort to deny the "Popular Unity" Government support and assistance. The well documented sabotage plans of American multinationals such as I.T.T. and the manipulation of International financial institutions such as the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank were specifically designed to deny the "Popular Unity" Government the domestic circumstances in which it could peacefully and successfully carry out its programme. After its election victory the Popular Unity Government was denied \$650 million credits already promised by International institutions, the U.S.A. and other Western Governments, including the present Conservative Government.

This concerted effort to undermine the Chilean economy was paralleled by continued aid and encouragement to the Chilean armed forces. It is against this background of economic and industrial sabotage, international conspiracy and treason that the present crocodile tears shed by the allies of Chile's powerful vested interests must be judged.

The Labour Party recognises the events in Chile for what they are, a savage blow to the aspirations of the working people of Chile, and a temporary victory for international capitalism.

The indecent haste with which the British Government recognised this present military junta is a source of shame for a country such as ours, so long associated with the best traditions of Chilean democracy. The Labour Party calls on the British Government to recall our Ambassador from Chile and to provide only the minimal consular facilities required to protect the lives of British citizens resident in Chile. Labour will oppose any attempt to restore to a fascist junta the credits denied to the democratically elected Government and we will oppose all British aid or trade designed to sustain the military regime in power.

At the same time the Labour Party calls on the British Government to press for the release of all political prisoners and an end to the present reign of murder and terror. The Government should offer to refugees from Chile the assistance and hospitality which Britain has traditionally provided to the victims of totalitarian persecution.

The Labour Party will associate itself with the Solidarity Fund of the Socialist International, which will provide financial assistance to enable the supporters of "Popular Unity" to continue their struggle. We do so because we believe that the Chilean attempt to peacefully change the social and economic structure of the country demands the support of democratic Socialists the world over. We believe that it is possible for elected Governments to bring about a radical and fundamental redistribution of wealth and power and yet preserve basic human rights and freedoms. But it is clear that those who hold power are as ready and willing as ever to espouse violence and terror when their privileges are threatened. It is necessary therefore to demonstrate clearly the international solidarity of democratic Socialists with our Chilean comrades, who are the victims of an attack which is in essence an attack on the ideals and aspirations of democratic Socialists all over the world.