

THE IMG AND CHILE SOLIDARITY: AN INITIAL BALANCE SHEET

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1. The May 5th demonstration marks the end of the first phase of our intervention on Chile. As such it is essential to assess its impact and importance dispassionately. From the point of view of our whole debate with the CP on this question it was without doubt a total and complete success. The fact that the CP itself understood this fact is amply illustrated by the fact that the Morning Star was compelled to give it maximum publicity on the day after having virtually ignored it in the preceding weeks. Every single argument of the CP was refuted by the demonstration itself:
 - a) Nearly 10,000 militants marched against the Labour government whereas the CP had argued that it would be impossible to have more than a couple of thousand given we only had four weeks to mobilise.
 - b) It was not a wild ultraleft extravagance as shown clearly by the composition of the platform and the discipline of the march itself. The fact that Newens, Collins, Coates and Roberts agreed to speak was a blow in itself for the CP.
 - c) The Chilean resistance provided a speaker and large numbers of Chileans were on the demonstration itself. The CP had argued that this would not be possible given the 'short time and the character of the demonstration'.From the point of view of mass publicity it was not a success, but for reasons beyond our control. It was blacked out by both TV channels and the entire bourgeois press with the exception of the Times. To a certain extent this could not be avoided, though better public relations work might have ensured more publicity.
2. The success of the demonstration was largely due to the fact that IS decided to make a national mobilisation. We should be quite clear that without the IS's forces the demonstration could not have been counted as a success. Outside the IS and IMG most of the groups were either locals of the CSC or small left groups. The demo therefore was a gathering of the revolutionary left organised in the space of four weeks. This factor will no doubt have lessons for other campaigns we might be engaged in. The reasons for the IS's decision to mobilise seem to have been a combination of the following 1) to show both the CP and the rest of the revolutionary left their strength; 2) to steal some of the clothes of the internal opposition - Hallas, et al, were extremely critical of the IS's failure to mobilise for Nov 4th and resolutions to that effect had been tabled at their EC; 3) to show centrist currents internationally that they were not totally an economic Anglocentric current on the British left. Whatever the reason from the Socialist Worker-reports it is clear that the IS have decided to pay more attention to 'international work' and we can expect them to make an appearance in a number of areas not least Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union!
3. An important element of the political situation as a whole today was shown by the remarkable ease with which the demonstration could take place in the sense that in the 1964-70 period of the Labour govt, it took at least 2½ years for mobilisation to develop on Vietnam whereas in this period, precisely because of that experience, not only the vanguard, but even sections of the masses (NALGO, NUT and now the AUEW) put their class interests before those of not "rocking the boat" This is of course an extremely positive feature of the present situation although we should go overboard on the question as this mood is by no means

universal. A fact demonstrated insofar that the 10,000 Glasgow workers participated in a May Day demonstration on May 5th which was led by Harold Wilson and the heckling was very much a 'vocal minority'.

4. On the future of our Chile work the following points should be noted.
a) We have consistently argued that the Ad Hoc Committee was a structure necessitated by the CP's bureaucratic control of the CSC and that if this was made a non-exclusive and democratic body it would not have been necessary. b) Our decision to carry on the fight inside the CSC at the same time as the Ad Hoc Committee was organising the demo, was totally vindicated by the decisions of the Liverpool Conference. But was this means in the following:

1) We have to carry on consistent work on this question as an organisation. This will involve a continuing Chile Commission, meeting once every three weeks or so; it will involve comrades from the leading bodies continuing to be involved with this work, and it will mean that in a number of areas we will have to assign comrades to work in the CSC together with the independents who have responded favourably to our initiatives. In some areas we might even have to set up CSC's ourselves, but this should be discussed very carefully since it would be disastrous to take the decision and then fail to sustain it. In London itself we should investigate the possibility with the CSC executive of a central London CSC branch since the largest number of uncommitted people were from London - some of them used to turn up at the Ad Hoc Cttee meetings.

2) We should project in the CSC for the latter to organise at least two regional conferences in the coming months; the obvious areas are Scotland and Yorkshire. We should ensure that there is a big turnout by London IMG on Chilean Naval Day, and for the projected Altamirano rally. The latter will be especially important to show the left of the Chilean SP that there are in Britain large forces to the left of the CP. If the projected tour by Mrs Allende comes off (under the auspices of the Labour Party) we will have to plan our interventions at all her meetings up and down the country since the tendency will be to make them as non-political as possible. Within the CSC we should argue for CSC speakers to speak with her. In addition to that we should try and organise a one day teach-in on Chile in London which encompasses all the different strands of the solidarity movement and which we would hope to turn into a contestation between revolutionary and reformist currents. Thus Heffer, Hart, British CP, Chilean CP, MIR, IMG, IS, Chilean LCG (our comrades) and possibly Blanco and Miliband, Hobsbawm, Sweezy and Mandel. If properly organised it could be one of the largest political meetings in London in recent years.

3) All this will necessitate the production of a 'Dossier on Chile' which we were hoping to get out for the demo, but couldn't. Even if the dossier is duplicated it will sell as sales of the Birmingham IMG's reproduction of the Ali pamphlet on Chile show. They produced 500 copies and either all or most copies were sold.