Figure 4.1 Arms sales were a consistent issue throughout the 1970s and 1980s.

Source: CSC, 'No arms sales to Chile.' Box 2 Posters and exhibition graphics, People's History Museum, LHASC, Manchester.
The helmet looked too big for his head. It sat awkwardly askew, falling backwards, and the man beneath looked up and out through thick-rimmed glasses. One hand grasped a machine gun, but his jacket still held its pocket square and remained buttoned up over his patterned jumper. He looked like a grandfatherly academic pulled away from his desk to defend the country. It was 11 September 1973 and these were the last hours of President Salvador Allende’s life. Planes roared over the Chilean capital. The whine of their engines reverberated off the old buildings and cobbled streets in the centre of the city.

The military coup was in full swing.

Jets strafed the palace, coming within metres of the edifice. They fired their rockets with accuracy. One pilot is said to have aimed for the windows, later boasting that he could land a rocket in a tin of condensed milk. With each hit an explosion of dust appeared, so thick it looked solid as it hung in the air. Deafening blasts filled the atmosphere as the bulky stone of the palace was blown apart and windows shattered, reducing sections of its fine facade to rubble. Flame, smoke and dust flowed in the wind away from the palace. And still the jets came.

These were Hawker Hunter jets, the main offensive aeroplane of the Chilean military.

Some time later, the ground forces had pushed their way into the palace shielded by tanks and President Allende lay dead in his office.

On the other side of the world 3000 men worked in a Rolls Royce factory in East Kilbride, just outside Glasgow. For a couple of days after the coup the factory routines went on as normal. The working week wore on, and on the third morning at 7.45 in the factory canteen, the scheduled shop stewards’ meeting opened. Peter Lowe was acting convenor and began proceedings with usual union business. Wage claims and finances were discussed and nothing was amiss or unusual.1 Towards the end, Bob Somerville raised his hand. He moved a resolution against the military takeover of the Chilean Government.2 Somerville was a Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB) member and he later admitted that it was ‘a political move on my part’.3 While there was nothing unusual or even unpredictable about that, what was unexpected was that an Amalgamated

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1 The previous convenor, McCulloch, was undergoing a major operation. Lowe would soon be elected to the role.
2 Minute of the Shop Stewards’ Meeting held in the main canteen on Friday 14th September 1973, Rolls Royce East Kilbride Shop Stewards Papers, Rolls Royce Factory, East Kilbride [hereinafter RREKSS]. Fighting bloody hand of Chile’s fascists by Jim Tait, 1974, RREKSS.
3 Interview with Bob Somerville (Chile activist, UK), 27 July 2007 [hereinafter Somerville Interview, 2007], notes in possession of author.
Union of Engineering Workers (AUEW) delegate with openly right leanings named John Burn seconded the resolution. Bob Somerville remembered that this left–right alliance ‘jelled the workforce’.4

The boycott had started.

It was a small resolution at the time—a gesture of revulsion against fascism—but it became, to borrow Bob Somerville’s words, ‘one of the greatest episodes in the history of Scottish socialism’.5

The gesture grew legs and a heart and became an action that moved under the influence of many masters. It would be wrong to think of it as isolated in the factory, or even within Scotland, without external influence. There were three main arenas that affected the boycott and each had their own tensions and politics: the factory at East Kilbride, the national-level leadership of unions and the parliamentary Labour Party. Each interacted to shape the skirmish between Chile and the workers at Rolls Royce East Kilbride. This chapter will draw together the threads from each arena in an attempt to understand the anatomy of such a boycott, and the effect of the different puppetmasters. The shipbuilding yards on the Firth of Clyde were under the same pressures, but there ideology and action intersected with a very different outcome.

The British unions with the most strategic industrial locations in terms of trade with Chile were the AUEW (due to their involvement in arms and shipbuilding),6 the Transport and General Workers’ Union (TGWU: docks and road transport) and the National Union of Seamen (NUS). The East Kilbride action involved the first two of those unions. What follows from here is a detailed reconstruction of the inter and intra-union politics of the AUEW and TGWU. It’s a laborious task, but one necessary to truly understand how a boycott for remote political gain unfolds.

The Rolls Royce aero-engine factory in East Kilbride was divided into four large sheds, labelled Blocks A–D. The factory primarily engaged in ‘servicing’, which is the repair and reconstruction of older engines, and Rolls Royce (1971) Limited held long-term service contracts with civil airlines and military forces around the globe.7 In the early 1970s maintenance on an aero-engine involved stripping and cleaning, with each component placed into an engine tray. Inspectors would use a pile of cards to check each piece no matter how small for its serial numbers and the quality of the work.8 It was tactile labour. Bob Somerville remembered

4 GCUA, ‘Chile and Scotland: 30 Years On’, Paper presented at the ‘Witness Seminar and Open Forum Series (No. 3), Saltire Centre, Glasgow Caledonian University, Saturday, 29 November 2003.
6 The Chile Monitor no. 6, 1974.
7 Rolls Royce Heritage Trust did not respond to any letters I sent about this project. Rolls Royce (1971) Limited is hereinafter referred to as Rolls Royce.
8 Somerville Interview, 2007.
‘you had a hand on every bit of that engine, booking it in’. The Avon 207 engine, which powered jets such as the Hawker Hunter, was a very successful industrial engine for Rolls Royce; however, the engine could not be ‘taken down’ in sections. It had to be totally ‘stripped’, which meant a significant amount of skilled work.

Somerville was an aero-engine inspector in the subassembly section in B Block. He applied for a job at Rolls Royce because his wife’s cousin had alerted him to the company’s need for tradesmen. He was an active community man and a CPGB member, and had joined the AUEW when he was fifteen. He ended up serving for 50 years. When the Chilean coup occurred he was a senior steward and the Rolls Royce factory was particularly well organised. In fact, the whole factory was unionised. Somerville recalled: ‘You didn’t-a get started at Rolls Royce unless you joined a union … So it was always a hundred percent [on] the shop floor.’

There were about 3000 workers in the factory in 1973. These workers were divided into sections within the blocks and each section elected shop stewards. The Rolls Royce East Kilbride (RREK) Shop Stewards’ Committee comprised about 100 men. Sitting above the shop stewards was a Rolls Royce East Kilbride Works Committee (RREKWC, or the Works Committee) of seven members. Each member of the RREKWC was elected annually from factory level, with a high level of re-election.

The AUEW held at least four positions on the Works Committee, in line with its predominance within the factory. The rest of the RREKWC consisted of one or more TGWU members and at least one allied trades (welders, sheetmetal workers, and so on) member. Scholars Coates and Topham have noted: ‘At plant

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9 ‘Book in’ refers to the process of writing down the ‘make’ (identification such as serial number) of every component of the engine. To ‘work’ an engine refers to the process of working on an engine. Ibid.
10 Commonly called the ‘Hawker Hunter boycott’ because the Avon engines were for Hawker Hunter fighters.
11 The ability to take an engine apart (‘take down’) in sections was a design function to make it easier and more cost effective to repair or replace parts. ‘Totally stripped’ means the engine was completely disassembled, cleaned, repaired and put back together. Somerville Interview, 2007.
12 Ibid. Somerville did his apprenticeship making mining equipment at Anderson Mavors—another militant workplace. Anderson Mavors was also involved in a (separate) Chile boycott.
13 In 2001 he received an MBE for his 16 years on the Motherwell College Board, 25 years on the Community Council, 25 years of youth work in judo and at the football club and 50 years as a trade union member and activist. Somerville to MacKay (Home Affairs Editor, Sunday Herald), 27.5.02, Robert Somerville, Rolls Royce East Kilbride Witness Seminar and Open Forum, GCUA, Glasgow.
15 Ibid.
16 Ibid.
17 Ibid. In 1973 the RREKWC comprised Peter Lowe (convenor, AUEW), Dugalid ‘Dougie’ Gilles (sub-convenor, AUEW), John Keenan and Robert ‘Bob/Bobby’ Somerville (both senior shop stewards and AUEW), Wally McLuskie (AUEW), Gavin Gordon (Allied Trades) and Jimmy Douglas (TGWU), who was soon after replaced with Danny Doorman.
18 Ibid.
level, multi-union steward organization is frequently of a more developed and hierarchical character than in the single-plant union; union heterogeneity seems to encourage stronger steward organization, which in turn makes inter-union co-operation more manageable.'19

The Rolls Royce East Kilbride organisation supports this assertion. The stewards were highly organised, and highly effective.20 The ordered and consistently managed structure of the unions in the factory ensured that news of action could be relayed among the 3000 workers quickly and effectively. Every action was reported from shop steward to section to committee where it was endorsed or rejected.

When interviewed in 2007, Somerville was coy about the political affiliations within the Works Committee. He did say that of the seven-man works committee, two were members of the BLP (John Keenan was one of them). As a CPGB member, Somerville was politically close to Gavin Gordon, who was of the left. Somerville remembered that the workforce was particularly militant, and estimated that 80 per cent of shop stewards were members of political parties, not always of the left, but predominantly so. Within the factory, there was an industrial branch of the CPGB and wide distribution of its newspaper, the Morning Star.21

Outside the factory in the same period, the town of East Kilbride was home to particularly well-organised community and worker groups. East Kilbride’s strong Labour/left organisation was a microcosm of the Scottish movement. The Scottish sections of national unions were generally regarded as radical and extremely well organised, as well as strong-headed and rebellious. All of this pointed towards action.

Shortly after the original resolution, Bob Somerville came in to the factory to start a shift, when he was called into the convenor’s office. According to Somerville, the convenor informed him that one of the stewards in his section had refused to work an engine for Chile. That steward was Bob Foulton. Somerville was surprised, because Bob was a church elder and not known to be a political man. As it turns out, he had refused to work the engine as a Christian on humanitarian grounds.22 With this first action, the RREKWC realised there

19 Coates and Topham, Trade Unions in Britain, 162.
20 Furthermore, the RREK example supports Peetz and Pocock, who note that if confidence, training, support and proper delegation of authority occur within a workplace, there will be greater union power. David Peetz and Barbara Pocock, ‘An Analysis of Workplace Representatives, Union Power and Democracy in Australia’, British Journal of Industrial Relations 47 (2009), 26.
21 ‘I’ve got to pay special thanks to Jimmy Milne, who stood solidly behind us. The Morning Star, who I was continuously … I was the sort of liaison between anything that happened in the factory, the Morning Star, Jim Tate, Andrew Clark whoever was available “this is happening”—Bang. It’s flashed to the rest of the country. Tremendous support, tremendous support.’ Somerville, GCUA, ‘Chile and Scotland: 30 Years On’.
were Chilean engines in the factory. Somerville went to investigate and then reported details of the stoppage back to the convenor. The RREKWC accepted the action as legitimate in light of the previous resolution and officially blacked the engines. Out of courtesy, the committee contacted management, and also the AUEW National Executive Committee, asking them to endorse the action in line with the policy and previous resolutions of the union.23 Peter Lowe, RREK convenor, also sent a telegram to Tony Benn, Trade and Industry Minister, stating: ‘Inform you we are refusing to work on Avon 207 engines used in the Hawker Hunter fighter/bomber in for overhaul for the Chilean Air Force.’24

The reaction of management to the boycott was remarkably calm. The good relationship that existed between the shop stewards and the company had much to do with this. The management persistently asked the stewards to get their labourers to work the engines. They did so politely, though with veiled threats. Catherine Curruthers of Rolls Royce wrote to the workers:

I must emphasise to you the serious position that would prevail if the Company is sued for non-performance of these legal obligations, and the further adverse effect which the attendant publicity would have on our order book and the future level of employment and prosperity among your members.25

Although management tried to persuade the unionists to work on the engines,26 in hindsight, Somerville felt that it was very awkward for them: ‘some of them we knew accepted that what we were doing was the right thing.’27 The workers did not lose hours or receive penalties for their stance.

When the boycott at RREK began Somerville ‘took a wee step back’ from its public leadership in the factory. He was on the Scottish committee of the CPGB at the time and it was important to the success of the boycott, and the Chile movement, that the action was not seen as a communist plot.28 The Glasgow Chile Defence Committee also kept a distance, respecting the public relations value of an ‘un-tampered’ worker-led boycott.29 A Works Committee, rank-and-file-led boycott held firm moral high ground.

Convenor Lowe was not politically minded, according to Somerville, but this worked in favour of the boycott. Having a nonpartisan public leader meant

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23 Lowe to ‘sir and bro’, 25th March 1974, RREKSS.
24 Telegram from Lowe to the Hon. A. Benn, M.P., 22/3/74, RREKSS.
25 Situation Report, 12 noon: Tuesday 2nd July 1974: Chilean Engines, RREKSS.
26 It was thought the maintenance contract would be taken up by Rolls Royce Motors, a wholly owned subsidiary in Brazil. ‘Rolls-Royce Nears Deal on “Blacked” Chile Jets’, Telegraph, 1 September 1974.
28 Ibid.
29 The Glasgow Chile Defence Committee (GCDC) recognised that ‘the working class character of the campaign has put it in the forefront of the international solidarity movement from the start’. Chile Defence Committee, ‘Resolution to Glasgow Chile Defence Committee A.G.M’ (Glasgow: 1974).
it could not be easily attacked as a biased plot. Lowe was invited to speak at various conferences and rallies.\textsuperscript{30} Even after the boycott was lifted, he was invited to speak at the trade union conference on Chile, ‘Bread, Work and Freedom’, in March 1979, because the Rolls Royce action was regarded by the Chile Solidarity Campaign in London as ‘an outstanding example to the whole trade union movement’.\textsuperscript{31} He did so much travel for ‘Chile business’ that the shop stewards put money towards a new briefcase for him.

That briefcase was to be the centre of an event that underlined the seriousness of the boycott for the Scottish unionists. Somerville recalled that Lowe travelled south ‘to do a TV programme and [when he] went to his hotel he put his briefcase down as all Scotsmen do, and went for a wee bevvy just to settle his nerves’.

When he returned, the briefcase was gone. He reported it to the police, but they just said he must have misplaced it. Later, when he arrived home, he heard a noise outside his house. Somerville continued:

\begin{quote}
And he went out, and here was these bundles of paper that had been pushed through the door. It was his papers that had been in the briefcase. So Peter being Peter [he] quickly ran to the window which looked up the main road, and there, lo and behold, was a policeman running out and into a car and driving off.\textsuperscript{32}
\end{quote}

Despite Lowe’s non-political background, his leadership of the East Kilbride boycott had brought him to the attention of some authorities. It also brought him prominence within the progressive labour movement. One episode could colour a whole career, overshadowing years of leadership on industrial issues.\textsuperscript{33} On Lowe’s retirement from Rolls Royce, the Rolls Royce Hillington Shop Stewards’ Committee wrote:

\begin{quote}
Your Committee at East Kilbride with Peter at the helm will be remembered in working class history for your persistent refusal to release the Avon engines intended to power the very Hawker Hunter Aircraft which were used by the Fascist Junta in Chile to straff [sic] the Presidential Palace and people of that country who were defending democracy.\textsuperscript{34}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{30} For example: Dobbie (CSC Tyneside) to RRSSEK [Rolls Royce Shop Stewards East Kilbride], 5th September 1978, RREKSS.

\textsuperscript{31} Gatehouse (CSC) to Lowe (Shop-Stewards Rolls Royce East Kilbride), February 4th 1979, CSC, CSC/11/10, LHASC, Manchester.

\textsuperscript{32} GCUA, ‘Chile and Scotland’.

\textsuperscript{33} This is also true in part of John Keenan. His concern for workers’ safety and other industrial issues took most of his union organising time rather than internationalism. John Keenan, Interview with Ann Jones, 8 September 2008, copy in possession of author.

\textsuperscript{34} McCormack (Rolls Royce Ltd, Hillington Shop Stewards Committee) to Rolls Royce East Kilbride Shop Stewards Committee 1st June 1983, RREKSS.
Without meaning to, Lowe and the RREK workers became known for what was initially a gut reaction to the coup, a mere resolution passed at a breakfast meeting.\textsuperscript{35}

Despite its eventual prominence, at first, the boycott continued for some months without official AUEW support. The majority of RREK workers were members of the AUEW, and in order to understand the representative quality of the boycott, it is necessary to discuss that union’s democratic practice. The AUEW’s structure at the time was complex, overlapping and exceedingly confusing, but also very important to understand so that individual actions and reactions can be appreciated in their correct context. The AUEW was one of the two largest unions in Britain: in 1975 it had 1,204,934 members, of which 133,425 were in Scotland.\textsuperscript{36} In 1976 the membership was broken into four sections: Engineering (the largest section by far): Construction Engineering; Foundry Workers; and Technical, Administrative and Supervisory Section (TASS).\textsuperscript{37} Its structure was complicated and its constitution based on that of the United States, with an elected parliament, an executive and a judiciary. The AUEW’s founding members had constructed the voting system to ensure that the rank and file had control of union business but, as John Higgins argued, ‘this admirable desire also gives rise to a very large rule book and the feeling that procedures are such as to prevent anyone from doing anything’.\textsuperscript{38}

The title of the union was also misleading, since there was never a full amalgamation.\textsuperscript{39} Various mergers had strengthened the union’s numbers, but also led to its hopelessly fractured structure. Each section enforced its own rules and had its own constituent body (the national committees). Representatives of the sections came together to form the National Executive.\textsuperscript{40} The president and general secretary of the Engineering Section were always the president and general secretary of the AUEW as a whole, reflecting the domination of the union structure by the engineers. The 52 representatives of the Engineering Section National Committee met once a year with the foundry representatives (seven), TASS (seven) and Construction Section (three representatives). Together, this

\textsuperscript{35} Somerville’s other community involvement and activist career were also over shadowed by his involvement in the Chile boycott.
\textsuperscript{36} The Engineering Section had 214 members in Gibraltar, USA, Canada and New Zealand in 1975. AUEW: Structure and Function of the Union.
\textsuperscript{37} The sections’ memberships were: Engineering (1.2 million members); Construction Engineering (30 000); Foundry Workers (50 000); and Technical, Administrative and Supervisory Section (TASS) (130 000). The AUEW Engineering Section is explained in more detail than the other sections here because it is that section which is most highly represented in the action at East Kilbride. It is also the biggest and most influential. Jim Higgins, ‘Amalgamating the Engineers’, Spectator, 1976; Milligan, The New Barons.
\textsuperscript{38} Higgins, ‘Amalgamating the Engineers’.
\textsuperscript{39} Due to an apparent loss of votes that the Engineering Section would suffer.
\textsuperscript{40} The National Council of seven men governed or administered the Engineering Section in line with the policies of the National Committee. If the national councilmen did not agree with the decisions of the National Committee they could take it to the appeal court, which also consisted of rank-and-file members. In this manner, the union was constructed to ensure that its lay members were theoretically in control of the union.
body was the AUEW National Conference. The National Conference decided on matters of joint policy affecting the union as a whole and was very obviously dominated by the Engineering Section. The AUEW structure was cumbersome, but democratic in that almost all of its posts were elected, not appointed.

Yet still further detail of the structure of the union is needed in order to understand the correct organisational context of the interaction between national-level leadership and rank-and-file activists at East Kilbride. There were 2740 branches. These branches met every two weeks. They were grouped into 234 districts, which were grouped into 26 organising divisions, which, in turn, were grouped into seven executive council divisions. The structure, however, had blurry boundaries. For example: ‘Parts of one organising division may be in more than one E.C. Division but no district is split in this way. Thus, two Districts and their branches may vote for the same Divisional Organiser, but, in [s]ome cases, for two different Executive Councilmen.’

One of the consequences of this complex, confusing structure was to give local committees more power. Higgins wrote that ‘the divisions and districts of the AUEW operate very much its independent fiefdoms’, and the president, Hugh Scanlon, tried to run the union like ‘an oversized shop stewards committee’. Indeed, Scanlon said that a divisional organiser was ‘king’ in his own area and held more power there than the regional officer.

The Executive Council (distinct from the National Conference or national committees) of the AUEW first discussed the coup in September 1973. There

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41 Each divisional committee elected two delegates for a total of 52 representatives on the National Committee of the Engineering Section. The National Committee met once a year and was the primary policymaking body of the Engineering Section. The president of the union chaired this meeting, and the general secretary and National Council members were present but were not able to vote. AUEW: Structure and Function of the Union.
42 The 186 full-time officials (president, National Executive Committee members, general secretary and various levels of organisers) and part-time branch officials were all elected. With the incorporation of TASS into the structure, a postal ballot was introduced. The postal vote system was expensive and the varied election times across the organisation made elections messy. The change in voting practice led to the right wing making a steady comeback against the left wing at a national level. In 1975 John Boyd (right wing) was to take the general secretary position from Bob Wright (left wing). Jim Higgins, ‘Trade Unions: Democracy at the Top’, Spectator, 1975; Milligan, The New Barons, 127–8; see also p. 23; AUEW: Structure and Function of the Union; Jim Higgins, ‘AUEW: Decline of a Union’, Spectator, 1975.
43 AUEW: Structure and Function of the Union.
44 Ibid.
45 Higgins, ‘AUEW’.
46 Edelstein and Warner, Comparative Union Democracy, 310.
47 The AUEW National Executive Committee was constructed of the Engineering Section National Council, with two representatives of each of the foundry and TASS and one or two representing the Construction Section. The AUEW National Executive Committee was thus made up of 12 or 13 persons, plus the president and general secretary, who, as mentioned previously, were always from the Engineering Section.
was no resolution, but it was decided that the Ambassador of Chile should be contacted and the British Government urged not to recognise the junta.\textsuperscript{48} This halfway approach reflected the attitude of the president, Hugh Scanlon.

Scanlon was a democrat,\textsuperscript{49} yet his support for Chile action appeared to wax and wane. In his capacity as a member of the executive of the Trades Union Congress (TUC), Scanlon put his name to various publications and was listed as an individual sponsor of the CSC, but he never committed completely to the cause.\textsuperscript{50} Nevertheless Scanlon’s international credentials were significant: he was nominated by the European Metal Workers’ Federation to go to Chile to secure the release of prisoners.\textsuperscript{51} Furthermore, in 1977 Scanlon agreed to raise the abuses of trade union rights in Chile at an International Metal Workers Federation conference in Munich.\textsuperscript{52} But his approach was scattergun. Scanlon did not seem to have anything personally against the CSC, or solidarity with Chile in general, but his, and subsequently the AUEW’s, interest in Chile did not match that of Jack Jones of the TGWU.\textsuperscript{53}

By 1974 Scanlon and Jones were not as close personally or politically as many perceived. In relation to another issue, Scanlon scathingly said at the 1974 TUC Brighton Conference that ‘I do not care if Jack Jones is Jesus Christ, and he thinks he is, but he will not change the AUEW’s decisions’.\textsuperscript{54} By that time, however, Scanlon appeared tired, and at the TUC congress, Ken Gill (communist leader of the AUEW TASS) seemed to be doing the talking for the AUEW.\textsuperscript{55} The decline of Scanlon in the eyes of the public continued with the right-wing swing in the AUEW elections of 1975.\textsuperscript{56} This fact is important to remember in the context of the boycott, along with the confusing structure with its various interstices and the personal politics of the leaders.

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{49} Higgins, ‘AUEW’.
\bibitem{50} To Callaghan (Secretary of State), October 9, 1974, STUC, STUCA 531/4, GCUA, Glasgow; \textit{Press Release from the TGWU, October 9, 1974}, STUC, STUCA 531/4, GCUA, Glasgow; \textit{CSC (pamphlet)}, 1974, CSC, CSC/7/2, LHASC, Manchester.
\bibitem{51} He was president of this organisation. He was also vice-president of the International Metal Workers’ Federation (1969–78). \textit{Minutes. Meeting of Executive Council, held in General Office, on the 26th February, 1974 at 10.00 am, Amalgamated Engineering Union}, MSS.259/AEU/1/1/214, MRC, UW, Coventry; Terry Pattinson, ‘Lord Scanlon: Charismatic Trade-Union Leader’, \textit{Independent}, 28 January 2004.
\bibitem{52} \textit{Meneses and Navarro to Scanlon, October 6 1977}, CSC, CSC/28/12, LHASC, Manchester. He did, however, leave the congress before any resolution on it was passed. \textit{Scanlon to Gatehouse, 2nd November, 1977}, CSC, CSC/28/12, LHASC, Manchester.
\bibitem{53} Moody has argued that passivity is a product of bureaucracy, and perhaps this was so in the case of Scanlon. Moody, ‘Towards an International Social-Movement Unionism’, 6.
\bibitem{54} This was the same conference at which the RREKWC representatives were summoned to break the boycott. Higgins, ‘AUEW’.
\bibitem{55} Ibid. TASS always strongly supported the RREK boycott.
\bibitem{56} Scanlon was succeeded by Terrence Duffy as president of the AUEW in 1978 and in 1979 was elevated to the House of Lords, becoming Baron Scanlon of Davyhulme. He had sworn previously to never accept a peerage and this caused embarrassment and some ill feeling towards him. Pattinson, ‘Lord Scanlon’.
\end{thebibliography}
Born in 1913 in Australia, Scanlon immigrated to Britain with his widowed mother at the age of two. He joined the CPGB in 1937, and separately worked his way up from the shop floor to become president of the AUEW (1968–78). A small, wiry, charismatic man, he was known for his scruples and quick-witted humour. Pattinson wrote in Scanlon’s obituary that his militancy influenced both Labour and Tory government relations with unions. His ascendance in that field was, in part, due to the nature of the industries in which his workers were employed. His union was involved in almost all facets of the arms industry in Britain.

On 27 April 1974, the Engineering Section of the union passed a motion to stop delivery of warships and submarines and to pressure MPs. It did not mention other arms or spares. On 1 May 1974, the AUEW TASS released a statement that called for the immediate cancellation of all military equipment orders for Chile. TASS was more direct with demands and rhetoric because its members were not likely to be involved in trade with Chile, and therefore had little chance to black. At East Kilbride the AUEW (mostly the Engineering Section) workers continued to boycott the engines without National Executive Committee approval.

After the RREK boycott had begun on 12 May, the AUEW Executive (where Scanlon still held a casting vote, making a left majority) sanctioned the terms of the boycott. They sent circulars to their 2700 branches instructing members to not work any ‘ships, vehicles, aircraft, or any other weapons which could be used against our brothers and sisters in Chile’. The original resolution of the AUEW Engineering Section had focused on ships and submarines, but it was challenged by the East Kilbride action. The AUEW Executive had been forced to extend the resolution to include aircraft. The rank-and-file action and the ideological support from the TASS had forced the hand of the AUEW National Executive and the new circular gave strength to the East Kilbride blacking.

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58 Pattinson, ‘Lord Scanlon’.
59 Ibid.
60 Rolls Royce had already written to the AUEW (W. Aitkin, divisional organiser) asking for clarification on the union’s position by 25 March 1974. McCollum (Rolls Royce Ltd) to Aitkin (AUEW ES Paisley), 25th March, 1974, RREKSS. During 1974 Scanlon openly supported the boycott on Chile armaments, specifically frigates and submarines. ‘Chile: Scanlon Acts’, Tribune [UK], 10 May 1974.
61 Gill, leader of TASS, was a member of the CPGB. TASS had a CPGB-dominated leadership. The Chile Monitor no. 6, 1974. The AUEW TASS Executive Committee sent a letter expressing their support and admiration of the East Kilbride Shop Stewards. Gill (AUEW) to Lowe, 21st May, 1974, RREKSS.
62 Scanlon later said that the black ban of jet engines and warships may widen to involve components. Raymond Perman, ‘Ban on Work for Chile may be Widened’, The Times, 15 May 1974; The Chile Monitor no. 6, 1974.
63 A trade unionist’s guide to the Chile issue: Does your firm trade in Torture@1974, CSC, CSC/16/2, LHASC, Manchester. It was sent to 2700 branches and more than 200 district committees. Perman, ‘Ban on Work for Chile may be Widened’. 

The Glasgow Chile Defence Committee succinctly summarised events up to this point: ‘ROLLS ROYCE workers’ action inspired the national AUEW to call on its members to black all arms going to Chile. The AUEW action, in turn, sparked off a debate within the Labour Party on the need for greater solidarity with the struggle in Chile.’\(^6^4\)

The AUEW blacking at Rolls Royce caused, according to the CSC, the British Government to cancel the Rolls Royce service contract with the Chilean Air Force.\(^6^5\) The contract was worth £70 000 a year to Rolls Royce—a very small portion of their overall business. The Glasgow Herald reported that the engines were invaluable because they were among the first Avons ever made. Of course, they were also invaluable to the Chilean Armed Forces for a different reason, and provided political ammunition for all sides of British politics.\(^6^6\)

Britain held 18 per cent of the South American arms market, and the Ministry of Defence and the Treasury both considered arms sales economically essential. Given an estimated 170 000 people were employed in the arms industry, fears of mass unemployment were easily conjured to allay planned boycotts. Private manufacturers of arms benefited from taxpayer-funded research, so from their point of view movement towards banning arms trade with any country set a dangerous precedent. The ministries and private companies unsurprisingly pressured the prime minister to maintain trade with Chile.\(^6^7\)

The politics of selling arms to Chile was haunting the newly elected Labour Government. The BLP conference had passed a resolution immediately after the coup calling on the Government to withhold all aid loans and credit;\(^6^8\) however, as Barbara Castle noted in her diaries, ‘relations between the Government and the National Executive’ of the BLP ‘remained sensitive. Trouble was likely to flare up at any time. It did so over the question of Chile.’\(^6^9\)

On 28 March 1974, the Defence and Overseas Policy Committee of the Parliamentary Labour Party (PLP) decided that no new arms contracts with Chile would be entered into. Existing naval and arms contracts posed a problem though, and the Labour Government was embarrassed by its previous strong moral stand in opposition.\(^7^0\) There were outstanding contracts worth £50 million

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\(^{64}\) Chile Defence Committee... *Glasgow Chile Bulletin Number One* (Glasgow: 1974).

\(^{65}\) Chile Solidarity Campaign, *Chile and the British Labour Movement*, 8, 9.

\(^{66}\) *Move to End Chile ban, Glasgow Herald, 19/8/76, CSC, CSC/15/1, LHASC, Manchester.*

\(^{67}\) Wilkinson, ‘The Influence of the Solidarity Lobby on British Government Policy towards Latin America’.

\(^{68}\) ‘Conference Decisions: Chile’, *Tribune [UK]*, 12 October 1973.

\(^{69}\) Castle, *The Castle Diaries*, 63.

\(^{70}\) On 23 November 1973, the PLP had called on the Conservative Government to prevent arms sales and Judith Hart made the mistake of stating that none of the ships should go there and that the trade unions were taking ‘effective steps’ in the matter. Ibid., 64.
for two Leander Class frigates, two Oberon submarines (at Yarrows and Scott’s respectively, both situated on the Clyde) and the refitting of a destroyer, as well as smaller projects such as the Rolls Royce engines.71

Cabinet decided that the difficulties of cancellation of the contracts were too great and would be deemed illegal.72 They argued that Chile might cut off its copper supply to Britain (compromising 30 per cent of the nation’s imported copper) if the contracts were not fulfilled, and that future military contracts would be lost.73 As Castle confided to her diary, however, this was a vexed moral and political question: ‘Even more important than our sales to Latin America (which Mason had said would be at risk) was to stick to the view that we took in opposition. That was paramount. Otherwise we lost credibility.’74

On the first day of April 1974, the chancellor, Jim Callaghan, told the House that contracts would be fulfilled. The Tribune scathingly made fun of his ‘honour’ and his decision to ‘honour’ the contracts.75 Resolutions from constituency branches of the party flooded in, calling for the decision to be reconsidered.76 A week later Cabinet was still in moral turmoil in determining the appropriate attitude to take towards Chile.77 In a single meeting it was decided on one hand to invite Madame Allende to visit Britain in solidarity with the plight of Chileans, but on the other Callaghan stood firm on the fulfilment of armament contracts and sending warships to Chile.78

The decision by the Government was taken as an affront by trade unionists.79

It was easy for the left to construe the Rolls Royce workers as heroes: the men gamely standing up to the Chilean and British Governments. There was some truth in this. As one commentator put it, ‘it was only the determination of [Rolls Royce]

71 Ibid., 57; ‘Chile will get Warships’, The Times, 9 April 1974.
72 The BLP, through a letter from Ted Rowlands to the CSC in November 1975, justified its shipment of arms to Chile, stating that it was illegal to back out of a contract and citing protection of Britain’s trading reputation. It assured the CSC again that no new contracts would be entered into.
73 Castle, The Castle Diaries, 76–7. General Arturo Yovanne proposed to the junta that the copper be suspended. Florencia Varas, ‘Chile Threat to Stop Copper Sales to Britain’, The Times, 30 March 1974.
74 Castle, The Castle Diaries, 77.
76 Resolutions Received from Constituency Labour Parties and Trade Unions, 1974, TUC [BLP International Department]. MSS.292D/936.1/2, MRC, UW, Coventry.
79 Just after this the AUEW national resolution was extended to include spares.
workers which kept the grounded Hawker Hunter engines in Britain’. The conception of the East Kilbride workers as morally superior to the parliamentarians added to the loss of credibility in the BLP, which grew steadily into a maelstrom over the next six weeks. On 19 April, Ron Hayward, general secretary of the BLP, criticised the decision to fulfil the contracts at the Scottish Trades Union Congress (STUC). Despite an attempt by Callaghan to calm the Chile storm at the party’s National Executive, the radical left thought he was ‘pussyfooting’.

One commentator observed that ‘the Government and the party have decided to go their separate ways’. The Cabinet and the Government seemed to separate too: more than 100 BLP MPs had signed the motion against delivery of vessels. The Times noted: ‘Some ministers say frankly that differences within the Administration, the Parliamentary Labour Party, and the trade union movement over supplying Chile with arms are creating the most serious difficulties since Mr Wilson formed his Government.’

By 2 May, the tension within the PLP was taut, Wilson was receiving pressure in Parliament from the Tory leader, Edward Heath, and embattled Chancellor Callaghan lashed out at various MPs in the left-wing Tribune Group, accusing them of muttering and smirking at him while he spoke. On 6 May thousands of ‘banner waving demonstrators’ walked from Hyde Park to Downing Street demanding the cancellation of contracts. Stan Newens MP spoke against the Government’s decision at the rally. Three days later, Tony Benn, Secretary of State for Industry, along with Judith Hart, Ian Mikardo, Michael Foot and Joan Lestor, added their voices to the dissent surrounding the Government’s decision at an International Committee meeting.

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80 Chile Defence Committee, *Glasgow Chile Bulletin Number One*.
81 The feeling at the BLP, which ran out of offices in Transport House (owned by TGWU), was not friendly towards the PLP. Hayward said that the BLP ‘would do well to remember whence it came and where a great deal of its support lay: namely, in the trade union movement’. Alan Hamilton, ‘Mr Hayward Rebukes Cabinet on Chile Ships’, *The Times*, 19 April 1974.
82 Chile Defence Committee, *Glasgow Chile Bulletin Number One*. In reply, on 24 April 1974, Callaghan asked for leave of the seat of chairman at the BLP National Executive Committee to address the meeting. He was ‘very mild’ about Chile, but Castle believed he calmed the trade union contingent and the left on the National Executive Committee. Castle, *The Castle Diaries*, 87.
83 This was particularly bad news for the CSC, whose influence on the PLP was much weaker than within the BLP. ‘Ministers Accused of Retreat on Chile’, *The Times*, 23 May 1974.
84 Kinnock and Flannery gathered 160 signatures on their early day motion against the export licences. It came to light immediately after the announcement that the engine repairs had still not been paid. *CSC Annual Report, 1978*. Stated as 140 signatures in: Affiliates’ Newsletter no. 29, July 23rd 1978, CSC, CSC/1/21, LHASC, Manchester.
86 Heath and Wilson exchanged words in Parliament in May 1974 over the East Kilbride issue. ‘Heath Accused Wilson of a “further capitulation to his left wing”, and Wilson retaliated by saying that Heath had a “lickspittle attitude” to the Pinochet regime.’ MacKay, ‘The Scot Who Humbled Pinochet Tells His Story’; Hatfield, ‘Callaghan Rebuke over Warships’.
87 Staff Reporter, ‘Marchers Protest over Arms Sale to Chile’, *The Times*, 6 May 1974.
88 Our Political Staff, ‘Mr Benn Joins Attack on Sale of Warships’, *The Times*, 9 May 1974.
Despite all of the turmoil, dissent and temper tantrums that further undermined the unity of the party, Wilson and Callaghan stuck to the decision: the contracts would be fulfilled, but no new contracts entered into. By enforcing the execution of the contracts, the Government had opened itself up to attack internally and externally. The CSC’s campaign on violence in Chile and the importance of cutting arms and aid had created such a climate of moral authority that the BLP’s wellbeing was endangered. Work on the frigates and submarines would take several years to complete. In one sense, every minute of those years represented a failure of the labour movement and a ‘betrayal of the Chilean people’, as well as of the BLP. Despite this, Barbara Castle was confident of government support on the Hawker Hunter boycott as distinct from the frigates and submarines, because the RREK was a grassroots action.

Figure 4.2 Michael Foot, Joan Lestor and Tony Benn chase down Callaghan with the Chile football.


It was not to be so. The Government asked the AUEW leaders to work the engines (despite it being directly contrary to the TUC and BLP conference resolutions) because the engines were the property of the Chilean Government. Having them in the factory apparently delayed the cancellation of the maintenance contract,

90 Castle, The Castle Diaries, 86.
and the Government wanted to rid itself of further political embarrassment. With this sort of attitude from the Government, Rolls Royce was then able to put pressure on the AUEW to lift the ban. Scanlon received various well-argued letters from Sir William Nield, deputy chairman of Rolls Royce, doing just this. Nield also forwarded the letters to John Boyd for his attention.

Boyd was a right-wing member of the AUEW Executive and pivotal at some stages of the boycott. He was a prominent teetotaller, a ‘tuba playing’ Salvation Army member, who, at that point, was the AUEW National Executive Committee member for Scotland. Boyd’s involvement at this critical juncture of the East Kilbride Chile boycott policy was indicative of both a swing towards the right wing of the union (it was immediately before a right-wing swing in the 1975 AUEW elections when Scanlon was looking ill) and apathy on this issue within the hierarchy. Boyd undoubtedly had a large impact on the events that followed. Boyd himself was not openly against Chile solidarity, but perhaps was against direct industrial action for external political causes such as that taken at Rolls Royce East Kilbride.

At a meeting in early September 1974, the AUEW Executive decided to consider ways to settle the ‘dispute’ only months after agreeing to support the boycott (after the Government had asked the AUEW to work the engines). Here the structure and rules of the unions played a crucial role. ‘The executive may run into some trouble’, commented the Telegraph’s industrial correspondent, ‘for East Kilbride workers had operated the ban unofficially for two months before getting official backing’. The backlash from members and solidarity interests came quickly.

92 Situation Report, 12 noon; Tuesday 2nd July 1974. The threat by Rolls Royce to the union was that reductions in orders would lead to layoffs. MacKay, ‘The Scot Who Humbled Pinochet Tells His Story’.
93 He would go on to become the general secretary in the late 1970s. Marsh, Trade Union Handbook, 168.
94 Nield sent the same letter to Jones of the TGWU, but did not provoke a jump to action. Nield had said that ‘the Company’s goodwill with its customers, and so its capacity to maintain employment, are bound to be damaged’. Nield (Rolls Royce Ltd) to Scanlon (AUEW), 5th August, 1975, RREKSS.
95 Boyd had been selected as the right-wing successor to Bill Carron, who retired as president of the AUEW in 1968; but Boyd was defeated at election by the left-wing Scanlon. The total poll included only 130 030 of 1 129 000 members. Scanlon won with 68 022 to Boyd’s 62 008. Scanlon’s re-election in 1970 was by an even larger margin. Thus there were deep ideological and personal differences between the two. In lieu of president, Boyd turned to the position of general secretary, ousting the pillar of the broad left caucus, Bob Wright, who was touted as Scanlon’s successor. Milligan, The New Barons, 123; Edelstein and Warner, Comparative Union Democracy, 311; Jim Higgins, ‘AUEW Election’, Spectator, 1975; Shipley, Revolutionaries in Modern Britain, 55.
96 Nield (Rolls Royce Ltd) to Scanlon (AUEW), 22nd August, 1974, RREKSS; Minutes. Meeting of Executive Council, held in General Office, on the 31st August, 1974 at 12.45 p.m., Amalgamated Engineering Union, MSS.259/AEU/1/1/216, MRC, UW, Coventry.
97 As early as September 1974, Scanlon wrote that the AUEW Executive Council could see no reason why the members should not work to facilitate the service of civilian aircraft for Chile: Scanlon to Milligan, 10th September, 1974, RREKSS.
98 ‘Rolls-Royce Near Deal on “Blacked” Chile Jets’. 
The AUEW Executive Committee met on 1 October 1974 to discuss the correspondence from branches which were concerned about the expected decision to withdraw support for the boycott. Significantly, all the branches were in support of continuing the boycott. Further, in the interim, Chilean trade unionists in exile Luis Figueroa, Humberto Elgueta and Anibal Palma had met with the AUEW Executive, which had expressed its sympathy with the Chilean cause. But their feelings of sympathy or solidarity did not override the politics at play within, and perhaps the economic imperatives of, the executive. Trying to fathom interactions in the spartan and opaque executive minutes is difficult, but it is obvious that John Boyd stamped his authority on the situation, splitting the committee to his favour with a four–two majority. The engines were to be worked. The International Marxist Group (IMG) reacted with its usual vigour: ‘the labour movement, and its’ leaders, allowed John Boyd and his placemen in the AUEW to isolate and cut down the Rolls Royce, East Kilbride, black on aircraft engines, the most important blacking action in Europe, without raising a hand to defend it.’

Boyd was the only protagonist in this situation whose influence and personal contact spanned all levels of the movement, from national to local. He secured the decision to work on the engines by summoning RREK convenors Lowe and Gillies, accompanied by Milligan (Mid Lanark district secretary), to Brighton on 3 September 1974. The RREK shop stewards were chastised in retrospect for informing the press of the boycott before the AUEW National Executive had the chance to communicate with the District Committee and shop stewards. It was reiterated that the resolution at the 1974 National Committee was much narrower, and the interpretation had to be broadened in concession to the East Kilbride action. Boyd told the convenors how the decision to expand the resolution was unacceptable to other sections within the union executive as well as members such as those working on submarines and warships (whose boycott actions we will come to shortly). Boyd highlighted the executive’s own ministrations with the Government, which led to the prime minister’s statement in Parliament on 21 May 1974, as if this ought to be enough of an effort for Chile solidarity. Boyd further emphasised the goodwill of the Rolls Royce company.

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98 The AUEW National Executive Committee’s solidarity did not, however, extend to boycotts, and few, if any, of the requests in the letter were taken seriously. Gatehouse to Les Dixon (AUEW), October 19 1975, CSC, CSC/4/2, LHASC, Manchester.
99 IMG—Scotland produced this pamphlet. Chile Solidarity—Build and Defend the Blackings, 1974, STUC, Tony Southall Collection, GCUA, Glasgow.
100 Probably while at the TUC congress in Blackpool. Ironically, Madame Allende attended that very Brighton conference; see Figure 2.3. Fighting bloody hand of Chile’s fascists by Jim Tait, RREKSS; Chile Defence Committee, Glasgow Chile Bulletin Number One.
101 Scanlon (AUEW) to Milligan (AUEW District Sec Mid Lanark), 4th September, 1974, RREKSS.
102 This statement included the recommendation to Rolls Royce that it give three months’ notice to the Chilean Government of termination of contract. Rolls Royce received written confirmation of this from Tony Benn. Statement to East Kilbride Works Committee: Chilean Air Force Engines, 1974, RREKSS; Fighting bloody hand of Chile’s fascists by Jim Tait; For Rolls Royce action on the termination see: D McLean, 2 July 1974, RREKSS.
With that, the AUEW Executive ordered its East Kilbride members to complete the overhauls, ‘under the arrangements and conditions as contained in the letter received from Sir W. Nield’—the very one forwarded to Boyd.\footnote{Scanlon (AUEW) to Milligan (AUEW District Sec Mid Lanark), 4th September, 1974; Fighting bloody hand of Chile’s fascists by Jim Tait.} The Glasgow Free Chile Committee said in its newsletter that the ‘Rolls Royce shop stewards were not impressed’.\footnote{Chile Defence Committee, Glasgow Chile Bulletin Number One.} Lowe and Gillies refused to lift the ban, stating that if the AUEW wanted to rescind on their instruction to black the engines, they would have to issue another instruction to the whole union.\footnote{Somerville said to him: ‘But you’re a Salvation Army man, you’re a Christian, why are you telling us to do something!’ Somerville Interview, 2007; Fighting bloody hand of Chile’s fascists by Jim Tait. Keenan tells a similar tale. Keenan Interview, 2008.} When the unionists returned to the factory, a letter directly instructing them to work the engines was waiting.\footnote{Though Scanlon signed this letter, I believe it was probably written by Boyd, who was given Nield’s letter to ‘deal with’.} As Somerville recalls: ‘The message from the executive of the [AUEW was] “Work on them” … It was a directive. If we’d said “no”, they [could just take] our shop stewards credentials off us.’\footnote{Somerville Interview, 2007.}

The disparate attitudes to Chile solidarity between the upper hierarchy of the union, or at least one man who spanned the echelons of the union (Boyd), and the rank and file reflect the endemic disconnection between the various levels of such a large union. Somerville continued:

> The work force: oh! We had a battle with the workforce. [But] we said OK, we’ll do them, but they’ll never get out of the factory … Although a lot of people just refused point blank … And the lad who initiated [it] just refused point blank ever to work on an engine [from Chile].\footnote{Somerville, in MacKay, ‘The Scot Who Humbled Pinochet Tells His Story’.}

Somerville said the AUEW directive ‘was a terrible letdown’,\footnote{Ibid.} and even more so because of its timing. It was the week of the first anniversary of the coup, when workers from the Rolls Royce factories at East Kilbride and Hillington travelled to London for the huge demonstration. Solidarity was otherwise at a peak.

The engines were put together with bolts untightened and placed into crates (without corrosion protection) then moved into the expansive yard that surrounded RREK.\footnote{Somerville Interview, 2007.} Workmen painted ‘Chile’ in white on the side of the crates so that drivers could make no mistake, and the overseer of the yard kept watch.\footnote{Ibid.; Move to End Chile ban, Glasgow Herald, 19/8/76, CSC, CSC/15/1, LHASC, Manchester.} Dougal Gillies also kept an eye on them, as he could see the crates from...
his house across a field.\footnote{112} The ‘bitter disappointment and disgust’ experienced by the workforce at East Kilbride were felt across the country and many wrote to the shop stewards about this.\footnote{113} A supporter wrote: ‘if General Pinochet does get his engines back I hope they are so rusty as to be useless.’\footnote{114} The AUEW leadership was happy to wipe its hands of the affair, stating that it was now a problem that concerned the TGWU and Rolls Royce.\footnote{115} In its correspondence with affiliates and local committees, the CSC did not mention the pressure applied by the AUEW on the rank and file at East Kilbride. They dared not interfere with union politics directly, and could not afford to lose the support of the AUEW at the national level.\footnote{116} The CSC had courted the AUEW at all its levels: nationally for the political stability and money, and at the grassroots level, where direct action could take place. Despite these efforts, the CSC could do nothing to control the internal policy and politicking of regime and procedure change such as that which occurred in the AUEW in 1975. The CSC never had high-level personal support in the AUEW as it did in the TGWU (with Kitson and Jones among others). Moreover, the CSC could not rely on broad left/right voting groups in the AUEW Executive Committee. Such partisan splits did not necessarily always function along the obvious dividing lines. As Higgins said, ‘like most other spheres of endeavour, our union hierarchies are often motivated by personal rivalry and antipathy as much as ideological differences’.\footnote{117} Even if Scanlon had wished to continue the boycott, his power was limited and was, it seemed, diminishing.

Paradoxically, despite previously pressuring the AUEW to work the engines, the Government withdrew the export licences in 1975 using further atrocities in Chile as a justification.\footnote{118} The inconsistencies within the PLP/BLP decisions were symptomatic of a split leadership between its sections and the sheer bulk of its organisation. Immediately after the engine export licences were withdrawn, four of the engines were secretly moved and taken to a warehouse in Paisley.\footnote{119} It took three weeks for activists to find them despite their proximity to East Kilbride. The agents of the Chilean junta were Kuehne & Nagle of Hayes, Middlesex.\footnote{120} The TGWU sprang into action, as reported by Alex Kitson in 1975:

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112 GCUA, ‘Chile and Scotland’.
113 Chile Fights 29 (London: CSC [Chile Lucha], 1978); Howden (AUEW Glasgow) to RRSSEK, 5-2-75, RREKSS.
114 Francis to RRSSEK, 6th August 1978, RREKSS.
115 Milligan (AUEW ES District Secretary) to Lowe, 13th August, 1975, RREKSS.
116 See, for example, the unspecific language: ‘Eventually such pressure was exerted that the men were forced to carry out the repair work for which the engines had been sent.’ Affiliates’ Newsletter no. 29, July 23rd 1978, CSC, CSC/1/21, LHASC, Manchester. Furthermore, the CPGB, which had representatives in most organising positions of the CSC, was very wary of using industrial tactics. Shipley, Revolutionaries in Modern Britain, 55.
117 Higgins, ‘AUEW Election’.
118 Fighting bloody hand of Chile’s fascists by Jim Tait.
119 Ibid. Beckett says they were taken to a ‘less squeamish plant in Paisley’. Andy Beckett, Pinochet in Piccadilly: Britain and Chile’s Hidden History (London: Faber & Faber, 2002), 151–2.
120 Lowe to McIntyre (Rosyth Dockyard Workers), 29.3.76, RREKSS; Nield (Rolls Royce Ltd) to Scanlon (AUEW), 5th August, 1975.
}
We have told the haulier who had them that if he attempts to move them from that warehouse then we will take the necessary action against him in other spheres to ensure that it interferes with his business, and these engines will lie there until they rot and they will not be worth anything by the time they are released.\textsuperscript{121}

Despite the threat, the ‘four engines got away, and eventually reached Chile’.\textsuperscript{122} Four remained in the RREK factory.

The crates sat in the yard at RREK, exposed to the inclement Scottish weather, while in London, Conservative MP Edward Taylor, whose seat was in Glasgow, called on the Government to stop its ‘conspiracy of silence’ on the Rolls Royce matter. In a sarcastic tone, he endeavoured to embarrass the Foreign Secretary, Tony Crosland, into convincing Jack Jones to lift the ban. He said, ‘as Mr Jones is always so anxious to tell the Government how to run the country the Government ought now to ask him if anything can be done’.\textsuperscript{123} Before this comment, in long and rousing speeches at the TUC-organised conference for Chile in 1975, Jones had committed himself and the TUC to Chile solidarity. He said, ‘if we all stand together we shall win in this great cause’.\textsuperscript{124} It was clear Jack Jones thought something could be done, even if it was not what Taylor had in mind.

All the while, the engines sat in their crates in the yard next to the workers who ran past during their informal lunchtime soccer matches. In 1977 management asked the workers to take the engines back into the factory to work them after the indicators showed severe corrosion.\textsuperscript{125} The workers refused. They were mostly AUEW members.\textsuperscript{126} For the most part, however, the maintenance of the boycott now rested in the hands of the TGWU workers, and their union had taken an entirely different tack with Chile solidarity.

The TGWU was the biggest union in the United Kingdom, with more than two million members in the mid 1970s.\textsuperscript{127} The TGWU was similar to the AUEW in that its founding principle was to allow lay members to decide policy and elect those

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{121} TUC, ‘Notes of Proceedings at a Conference on Chile held at Congress House’, 17.
\item \textsuperscript{122} Scottish Chile Defence Committee: Rolls Royce Engines for the Chilean Air-Force, 1978, RREKSS.
\item \textsuperscript{123} Statement to East Kilbride Works Committee: Chilean Air Force Engines: Move to End Chile Ban.
\item \textsuperscript{124} Jack Jones, in TUC, ‘Notes of Proceedings at a Conference on Chile held at Congress House’.
\item \textsuperscript{125} Rolls Royce Engines Snatched for Chilean Junta, Oxford Chile Joint Committee, MSS.21/1279, MRC, UW, Coventry.
\item \textsuperscript{126} MacKay, ‘The Scot Who Humbled Pinochet Tells His Story’; Fighting bloody hand of Chile’s fascists by Jim Tait; Singer, ‘RAF Denies any Involvement in Removal of Chile Aero-Engines’, 24.
\item \textsuperscript{127} The TGWU was divided into 11 sections: General Workers; Docks and Waterways; Commercial Services; Passenger Services; Public Services and Civil Air Transport; Vehicle Building and Automotive; Power and Engineering; Chemical, Rubber and Oil Refining; Food, Drink and Tobacco; Building, Construction and Civil Engineering; Administration, Clerical, Technical and Supervisory.
\end{itemize}
who implemented it.\textsuperscript{128} The character of the TGWU was dual: representatives on its general executive council were elected partially on a geographic basis and partially according to industry group affiliation.\textsuperscript{129} Branches were the base unit of the union and below them shop stewards in each workplace dealt with the everyday wellbeing of members.\textsuperscript{130}

The 35-member TGWU General Executive Council (TGWU GEC) was the highest governing body of the union. It reflected the two organisational groups of the union in that geographical representatives were elected by ballot of the membership of the regions, and there was one representative from each national trade group committee.\textsuperscript{131}

The TGWU GEC members were all part-time voluntary officeholders who appointed the paid national and local officers.\textsuperscript{132} The appointment, rather than election, of these senior officials meant the TGWU could be conceived as being less democratic than the AUEW. What is more, the general secretary was elected by ballot of all members of the union. Once elected, however, the general secretary held the office for life. The autocratic nature of the union was thus played out. Stephen Milligan has emphasised that this tendency was exacerbated by low member participation and high turnover of members.\textsuperscript{133} The general secretary was an extremely powerful position, further enhanced by the personal connections of Jack Jones to the BLP (see Chapter One), but this did not necessarily translate to control over the rank and file.

In some sectors (notably the docks and waterways) the general secretary and the Executive Council had very limited influence because of the strong grassroots leadership.\textsuperscript{134} The sheer size and oligarchic tendencies within the branch

\textsuperscript{128} The Biennial Delegate Conference decided on policy. Delegates were nominated from branches and voted on by regional trade groups. This is a democratic process but very low attendance at branch meetings meant that elections (and branches in general) were generally controlled by an inner circle, or oligarchy. Those elected were nominated from or by this inner circle. As with most unions, the TGWU claimed its structure was ‘designed to give members on the shop floor a voice in policy-making and decision-taking’. Milligan, \textit{The New Barons}, 216–17; Marsh, \textit{Trade Union Handbook}, 347; Transport and General Workers Union National Executive Committee, \textit{The Story of the T.G.W.U.}, 7.


\textsuperscript{130} In the 1970s there was a gradual shift towards more single-workplace branches (rather than multi-shop branches). Jack Jones saw the shift to single-shop branches occurring and tried to accelerate the process to decision-making at a shop steward level. He met with limited success as branch oligarchs controlled all communication and the shift was a threat to the power of some branch officials who had benefited from low voting attendance at multi-factory branch meetings. ‘Only a small percentage of union members ever attended trade union meetings. This meant that a small number of members, such as communists, could effectively take control.’ Keith Laybourn, \textit{A History of Trade Unionism c. 1770–1990} (Phoenix Mill, UK: Alan Sutton, 1992), 177; Milligan, \textit{The New Barons}, 95.

\textsuperscript{131} In 1975 ‘roughly half a dozen’ members of the Executive Council (39 members) were communists. Milligan, \textit{The New Barons}, 95.

\textsuperscript{132} Ibid., 94.

\textsuperscript{133} Ibid., 95.

\textsuperscript{134} Ibid.
structure meant that the TGWU, despite its large staff and (it was generally agreed) honest leadership from Jones, was a union with a potential disjuncture between its hierarchy and its lay members, its leaders and its led.

Immediately following the coup, the TGWU GEC resolved to support Allende’s widow, and, distinct from the AUEW, planned to lobby unions in the United States to press their own government on the Chile issue. At a meeting on 5 December, the TGWU GEC noted their commitment to a unilateral boycott (the TGWU only) of the Chilean junta if no other sort could be achieved. On 7 June 1974, a lengthier resolution was passed calling on all TGWU members to support the boycott campaign on all aircraft, warships and other equipment that could be used by the junta against the Chilean workers. Early in 1976, the TGWU took to using the phrase ‘harassment of Chilean transport’ as was employed in the ITF resolutions, and this embodied the degradation of ferocity of the official position of the union. As the junta in Chile solidified its grasp on power, the TGWU progressively softened its stance, though it never completely withdrew support for direct action.

The TGWU GEC minutes show that Chile, and Jones’s activities to do with Chile, were constantly discussed over many years. According to the sums listed in the minutes, the TGWU effectively bankrolled the CSC and Chile solidarity in general. Yet, in those same minutes, the RREK boycott was never specifically discussed. It seems that despite the organisational possibility of autocracy, the TGWU members at East Kilbride were free to boycott Chile as they saw fit.

It would soon be out of their hands.

The Hamilton Sherriff Court (Scotland) ruled an injunction on the engines in favour of the Chileans in August 1978, stating clearly that the junta was the rightful owner of the boycotted engines. While this may not have said anything new, it did start things moving in favour of the junta. Rolls Royce

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135 An immediate deputation from the TGWU General Executive Committee was sent to the Foreign Secretary. Minutes and Record of the two-hundred and fifth statutory meeting of the general executive council held at transport house: First day, September 17, 1973, TGWU, MSS.126/T&G/1186/A/51, MRC, UW, Coventry.

136 Minutes and Record of the General Executive Committee, December 5, 1973, TGWU, MSS.126/T&G/1186/A/51, MRC, UW, Coventry.


138 This seemed to be so that they would avoid legal problems. Minutes of the General Executive Council, March 4, 1976, TGWU, MSS.126/T&G/1186/A/54, MRC, UW, Coventry.

139 ‘Rolls-Royce Workers Free Aero-Engines Overhauled for Chile’, The Times, 19 August 1978, 3; Singer, ‘RAF Denies any Involvement in Removal of Chile Aero-Engines’; Ronald Faux, ‘Docks Watch by Workers for Chilean Engines’, The Times, 29 August 1978, 2; Fighting bloody hand of Chile’s fascists by Jim Tait.
declared its intention to cooperate with the Chileans, who had the legal right to their engines.\textsuperscript{140} They posted notices around the factory stating the company’s legal position.\textsuperscript{141}

A general election was looming at the time of the injunction.\textsuperscript{142} It became obvious that the export licences were the last major legal barrier to the junta’s repossession of the engines.\textsuperscript{143} The CSC recorded that the junta and their ‘friends’ ran a ‘carefully orchestrated’ campaign ‘designed to modify British Government policy with regard to Chile’.\textsuperscript{144} Robert Adley (a Conservative MP representing Christchurch and Lymington)\textsuperscript{145} suggested the Government was holding the engines at the ‘instigation’ of the East Kilbride Shop Stewards, implying that the Government was run by rank-and-file trade unionists.\textsuperscript{146} Adley said the issue was not the situation in Chile, but ‘nothing less than international banditry by the Government’.\textsuperscript{147} General Gustavo Leigh of the Chilean Air Force accused the Government of obstructing the return of the engines through bureaucratic means,\textsuperscript{148} and the less than progressive (according to the CSC) Scottish press and the Daily Telegraph pressured the shop stewards to give up the boycott.\textsuperscript{149}

At the factory in East Kilbride, the shop stewards received letters that melodramatically linked the boycott to the ‘red takeover’ and moral decay of the United Kingdom.\textsuperscript{150} Some were threatening, such as an anonymous and very poorly written note to ‘Peter Low’: ‘we are now taking steps to shut) you up ) about Chillie also you talk about the (IRA) we will be getting your Black Specks off so that you will be able to see to work so a Warning (Shut Up Low).’\textsuperscript{151}

The CSC was slow to respond to the crusade for the release of the engines. They were preoccupied with a wave of hunger strikes and a highly choreographed demonstration on 9 July 1978.\textsuperscript{152} The CSC did manage to encourage a letter-writing campaign, aiming to stop the engines from leaving the country and halt further

\textsuperscript{140} Chilean Air Force Engines, 1982, RREKSS.
\textsuperscript{141} ‘Rolls-Royce Workers Free Aero-Engines Overhauled for Chile’.
\textsuperscript{142} MacKay, ‘The Scot Who Humbled Pinochet Tells His Story’.
\textsuperscript{143} CSC Annual Report, 1978.
\textsuperscript{144} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{145} Adley and others were labelled ‘Tory backwoodsmen’ by the CSC. Adley had his suggestion for an emergency debate on the export licences rejected by the speaker. To: CSC Local cttee secs Re: March for the 2,500—Sunday July 9th London, 1978, CSC, CSC/1/20, LHASC, Manchester; Benedict Birnberg, ‘Government Accused of International Banditry’, The Times, 14 June 1978, 14.
\textsuperscript{147} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{148} ‘Trade Union Stops Return of Jet Engines to Chile’, The Times, 10 June 1978, 2.
\textsuperscript{149} To: CSC Local cttee secs Re: March for the 2,500: Affiliates’ Newsletter no. 29, July 23rd 1978.
\textsuperscript{150} Robert Leckie wrote: ‘It is trade Unions that has brought this Country to its knees.’ Leckie to RRSSEK, 29-8-78, RREKSS.
\textsuperscript{151} Peter Lowe. We are now taking steps to shut) you up), 1978, RREKSS.
\textsuperscript{152} CSC Annual Report, 1978. The march for the 2500 missing people in Chile was silent, accompanied by the beat of a single drum. It aimed to have one white carnation for each missing person in Chile. To: CSC Local cttee secs Re: March for the 2,500.
softening of the British Government’s position on Chile.\textsuperscript{153} The inaction of the CSC during the attack on the boycott could point to overwork of the staff in the office. It might also be evidence of their confidence in the unbreakable strength of the boycott, which had become a symbol of the worker-based nature of the solidarity movement. On the other hand, perhaps the campaign could not afford to become embroiled in union business.

In London, facing pressure from the left and the right, Callaghan had turned to his legal counsel to solve the problem. Rolls Royce was the only case of unfulfilled work since the ban of arms to Chile was first laid down in 1974.\textsuperscript{154} Consequently, Edmund Dell, Secretary of State for Trade, adhered to a cabinet subcommittee decision and the export licences were granted on 20 July 1978.\textsuperscript{155} Rumours circulated that there would be state collusion in the removal of the engines, including a mobilisation of the Army.\textsuperscript{156} \textit{The Times} speculated that a ‘lightning raid’ to repossess the engines would occur.\textsuperscript{157} Callaghan simply said he hoped no subterfuge would prevent their removal.\textsuperscript{158}

The fact that the Labour Government which withdrew their ambassador after British citizen Sheila Cassidy was incarcerated and tortured had now granted export licences for the engines caused disbelief and further disillusionment within the left in Britain.\textsuperscript{159} It was, said Peter Lowe, an ‘immoral act’.\textsuperscript{160} Support from unionists, union branches and individuals flowed to East Kilbride, some urging continuation of the boycott, and some supporting the workforce decision, whatever it be. Notable by its absence was national-level support from the TUC.

\textsuperscript{153} Affiliates’ Newsletter no. 29, July 23rd 1978.
\textsuperscript{154} ‘R-R Engines Can Go to Chile’, \textit{The Times}, 21 July 1978, 2.
\textsuperscript{155} Ibid.: Fighting bloody hand of Chile’s fascists by Jim Tait. The Cabinet had been advised that they were legally obliged to do so after the injunction by the Scottish court. Callaghan said the engines needed to be returned to Chile and it was a purely commercial matter that the Government had no part in. Faux, ‘Docks Watch by Workers for Chilean Engines’, 2; ‘Removal of Aero Engines a Commercial Matter’, \textit{The Times}, 28 July 1978, 4.
\textsuperscript{156} \textit{The Times} reported that Bruce Millan (Secretary of State for Scotland) in the Cabinet Defence and Overseas Policy Committee meeting had suggested the use of troops to remove the engines while the workforce was away. Frederick Mulley (Secretary of State for Defence) opposed the plan, saying it would be an inappropriate use of the armed service. It was from this suggestion that a rumour grew of state collusion in the removal of the engines. Rolls Royce advised against the use of troops. MacKay, ‘The Scot Who Humbled Pinochet Tells His Story’; Peter Hennessy, ‘Government Will Issue Export Licences for “Blacked” Engines Soon’, \textit{The Times}, 19 July 1978, 4.
\textsuperscript{157} Rolls Royce Engines Snatched for Chilean Junta.
\textsuperscript{158} ‘Removal of Aero Engines a Commercial Matter’, 5.
\textsuperscript{159} Sheila Cassidy was a British citizen who had been detained because she helped an insurgent with medical treatment. Docks and Waterway’s National Committee Minutes, 20th October, 1977, TGWU, MSS.126/TG/820/1/4, MRC, UW, Coventry; Patrick Keatley, ‘Stronger Line on Chile Demanded’, \textit{Guardian} [Manchester], 6 January 1976. A full description of Cassidy’s life in Chile, her arrest and imprisonment can be found in: Cassidy, Sheila Cassidy. Solly (Putney BLP) to Owen (MP) 3rd August 1978, RREKSS; Geleit (Epsom & Ewell Advisory Committee NGA) to RRSSEK October 9th 1978, RREKSS; Jackson and Brooks (SOGAT Waterlow & Sons Ltd ‘Radio Times’ Warehouse Chapel) to RRSSEK, 5th Aug. 1978, RREKSS.
\textsuperscript{160} Faux, ‘Docks Watch by Workers for Chilean Engines’.
although the STUC was strong in its encouragement. The TGWU leadership commented through Alex Kitson that the boycott was in line with the TGWU’s policy of ‘hostility’ to the Chilean Government and the union supported its rank-and-file members.

Unionists and others offered to guard or sabotage the engines. Scottish Area NUM general secretary, Eric Clarke, wrote to the shop stewards saying: ‘You are not alone—keep up the resistance and if there is anything we can do, morally or physically to help, please do not hesitate to ask.’

‘The final hurdle’ in relation to the repossesion of the engines was in the hands of the rank and file in East Kilbride. The pressure caused the RREK Shop Stewards to seek legal advice from solicitor Peter T. McCann and the learned senior counsel Charles MacArthur QC. Any picket, the advice argued, could be viewed as criticism of the Hamilton court and therefore could be counted as contempt. Refusing to obey an order could end in dismissal, but contempt of court could mean a jail sentence.

161 It is very likely the Glasgow Chile Defence Committee’s persistence, along with its connections within the communist party, had an affect on STUC attention on Chile. The Scottish unions were led by the Scottish Trades Union Council (STUC), which consistently passed strong anti-junta resolutions. Large sections of the STUC annual report were dedicated to Chile. Scottish solidarity was perhaps the strongest of all in Britain. One of the largest campaigns was over soccer. Chile Defence Committee, ‘Resolution to Glasgow Chile Defence Committee A.G.M’; Scottish Trades Union Congress Seventy Eighth Annual Report (1973), STUC Annual Reports, GCUA, Glasgow; Milne (STUC) circular, 16 January 1976, STUC, STUCA 507/1, GCUA, Glasgow; Don’t Play Ball with the fascists!, 1977, CSC, CSC/1/12, LHASC, Manchester; Petition to: The Scottish Football Association concerning: The Scotland–Chile Match, 1977, CSC, CSC/1/12, LHASC, Manchester; McLean (NUM Scottish Area) Circular re Chile, 12th August 1977, RREKSS Chile; McLean (NUM) to RRSSSEK, 1st September 1977, RREKSS; Scotland v Chile June 15th 1977 [flyer], STUC, STUCA 516, GCUA, Glasgow; Minutes of the Statutory Meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee of the General Executive Council, March 31, 1977, TGWU, MSS.126/T&G/1186/A/55, MRC, UW, Coventry.

162 ‘Trade Union Stops Return of Jet Engines to Chile’, 2. John Henry, deputy general secretary of the STUC, was asked if the boycott would continue after the grant of export licences. He deferred to the authority of the rank and file at the East Kilbride Factory. ‘[T]hat will be a decision taken by the Rolls-Royce workers. I imagine that the blacking would still stand’, he said. Hennessy, ‘Government Will Issue Export Licences for “Blacked” Engines Soon’, 4. Jimmy Milne, STUC general secretary, echoed this view: ‘in the end it is the decision of the workforce that matters.’ Moss Evans, general secretary of the TGWU, told the CSC: ‘We can assure you that our members will maintain their spontaneous act of solidarity on this issue.’ Affiliates’ Newsletter no. 29, July 23rd 1978. Jimmy Milne (STUC) said, ‘there is no way any of our members will get those damned engines out of Britain. If scab labour is brought in, they will not get past the front door.’ Milne, in MacKay, ‘The Scot Who Humbled Pinochet Tells His Story’, The TGWU ‘enlisted’ the support of local haulage firms to ensure the engines would stay where they were. The Road Haulage Association said it feared for the safety of its members and their property. ‘Blacked Engines “Too Hot to Handle”’, Sunday Express, 20 October 1978, RREKSS.

163 Clarke (NUM Scottish Area) to RRSSSEK, 20th July 1978, RREKSS. Leeds Trades Council also offered to help in such a manner. Huffinley (Leeds Trades Council) to RRSSSEK, 31st August, 1978, RREKSS.

164 Clarke (NUM Scottish Area) to RRSSSEK, 20th July 1978, RREKSS. Leeds Trades Council also offered to help in such a manner. Huffinley (Leeds Trades Council) to RRSSSEK, 31st August, 1978, RREKSS.

165 This also included a round-the-clock watch, which some workers in the factory were keen to man. Fighting bloody hand of Chile’s fascists by Jim Tuit; Somerville Interview, 2007.

166 ‘If any members of the Union who are employed by Rolls Royce took active steps physically to try and stop the departure of the engines then he would be in serious trouble … It is, however, a wholly different matter if an employee of Rolls Royce is asked to shift an engine and refuses to do so.’ Note by Senior Council for T.&G.W. Union, 1978, RREKSS.
In August 1978 a 75-minute meeting of 1500 workers from RREK decided they would not impede the removal of the engines.168 They unanimously passed the resolution that ‘we refuse to co-operate in the removal of the Chile engines from the factory’.169 Dougald Gillies and Peter Lowe, the convenors, said the men would not break the law. If they did so they would be ‘reducing [themselves] to the level of the thugs in Chile’.170 A handwritten note on the back of the solicitor’s advice revealed a two-part contingency plan:

1) Refuse to cooperate in the removal of the Chile engines from the factory

2) [In] the event of anyone attempting to remove the Chile engines from the factory, we call an immediate stoppage of work and a protest demonstration.171

The workers at East Kilbride were never able to put the plan into action.

As was customary at the time, all the factory workers would take their annual three-week holiday at one time. The whole place was basically deserted. John Keenan, shop steward, along with maintenance staff were the only ones who remained on duty during the period.

But they were at home in bed when at 4 am on Saturday, 26 August 1978, two lorries accompanied by the sheriff signed in at the gate of the East Kilbride Rolls Royce Factory.172 Management representatives were woken up and called to the factory to check the documents. It took two hours to load the engines onto the lorries, as together the engines weighed 6 t and required special equipment and skills to manoeuvre.173 The lorries had false numberplates and fictitious names painted on their sides: ‘Harvey’s Ltd’174 After they drove off into the early dawn of summer, all that remained was a ‘neatly swept’ gap where the Chilean engines had stood for years.

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168 The Chilean authorities had been negotiating to get the engines for at least a year before this. They also renegotiated the contract with Rolls Royce, releasing the company from obligations to deliver the engines. ‘Rolls-Royce Workers Free Aero-Engines Overhauled for Chile’, 3; Singer, ‘RAF Denies any Involvement in Removal of Chile Aero-Engines’; Faux, ‘Docks Watch by Workers for Chilean Engines’, 2; Fighting bloody hand of Chile’s fascists by Jim Tait.
169 Lowe to McCann, 1978, RREKSS.
170 ‘Rolls-Royce Workers Free Aero-Engines Overhauled for Chile’.
171 1. Refuse to cooperate …1978, RREKSS.
172 McCann (solicitor) to Chief Constable, Strathclyde Police, 26th September, 1978, RREKSS.
173 Fighting bloody hand of Chile’s fascists by Jim Tait; Angela Singer, ‘Mystery Clouds Movement of Chile Engines’, Guardian [Manchester], 28 August 1978, 2; Faux, ‘Docks Watch by Workers for Chilean Engines’.
174 The numberplates were: DKT 33 K, MON 681 G, VCS 937 S. The inquiries by the committee found that none of the vehicles registered under those numberplates could bear the weight of the engines nor had been equipped with a crane. McCann (solicitor) to Chief Constable, Strathclyde Police, 26th September, 1978; CSC Annual Report, 1978.
Figure 4.3 Oxford Joint Chile Committee campaign flyer.

Source: Rolls Royce Engines Snatched for Chilean Junta.
Union officials were furious.\textsuperscript{175} Lowe bitterly complained that ‘there is nothing we can do now that the engines have already left the factory. We can only hope that our fellow trade unionists everywhere else will take up the cudgels on behalf of the people of Chile.’\textsuperscript{176}

With the engines off Rolls Royce property, the company (like the national union leaders) washed its hands of the whole affair.\textsuperscript{177} The removal was conducted within the law, while any agreement on the use of union labour within the factory was suspended in the presence of a sheriff with a court order.\textsuperscript{178}

After the boycott ended, the shop stewards received waves of grateful letters and commiserations.\textsuperscript{179} Cornejo, CUT representative in Britain, wrote to the Rolls Royce East Kilbride Joint Shop Stewards’ Committee, on behalf of the trade union movement of Chile:

You[r] actions have become one of the most powerful symbols of the International Solidarity Movement and all Chilean Trade Unionists both inside Chile and in exile, salute you.

We look forward to the day when we can greet your representatives in a free Chile.\textsuperscript{180}

\textsuperscript{175} Faux, ‘Docks Watch by Workers for Chilean Engines’, 2; Chile Solidarity Campaign, \textit{Chile Solidarity Campaign: Annual Report, 1978}; \textit{Affiliates’ Newsletter no. 29, July 23rd 1978}; Reg. numbers of Lorries … 1978, RREKSS.

\textsuperscript{176} \textit{Affiliates’ Newsletter 57, December, 1982}, CSC, CSC/44/6, LHASC, Manchester. Also quoted in Singer, ‘RAF Denies any Involvement in Removal of Chile Aero-Engines’. Martin Flannery, MP for Sheffield Hillsborough and Secretary of the PLP Chile Group, said the disappearance of the engines was ‘moonlight smuggling’ and he hoped the Government played no part in it. Glasgow Provost, Peter McKennar, aided the investigation of where the engines went. One engine was rumoured to have appeared in Hillingdon in the south. Empty crates similar to those that housed the engines were found in the Princes Dock in Glasgow. Dugald Gillies theorised that they were dropped into the Atlantic Ocean. Accusations that the engines were taken to the Brize Norton Base of the RAF were dismissed by RAF representatives. Gatehouse noted that if they were taken to a RAF base it would indicate that the Chilean Air Force had been granted landing permission to pick them up. McCann, on behalf of the RREKSS, lodged a complaint with Strathclyde Police about the use of false numberplates, which would be in breach of the road traffic act. Their first inquiries were politely rebuffed by the police, and McCann had to insist on the illegal nature of the false numberplates for them to investigate further. His inquiries continued, until finally hitting a wall (despite having Neil Kinnock making inquiries as well). The Crown Agent replied that there was no evidence of any offence. Singer, ‘RAF Denies any Involvement in Removal of Chile Aero-Engines’, 24; Chile Solidarity Campaign, \textit{Chile Solidarity Campaign: Annual Report, 1978}; ‘Chile Engine Crates Found’, \textit{Morning Star}, 16 August 1974; Somerville Interview, 2007; Hamill (Chief Constable Strathclyde Police) to McCann (Solicitor) 13 September 1978, RREKSS; O’Donnell (Crown Agent) to McCann (Solicitors) 10 April 1979, RREKSS; Singer, ‘Mystery Clouds Movement of Chile Engines’; Sill (Strathclyde Police) to RRSSC, 23 March 1979, RREKSS; To the Chief Constable Strathclyde Police, 6th September, 1978, RREKSS.


\textsuperscript{178} Faux, ‘Docks Watch by Workers for Chilean Engines’; \textit{Affiliates’ Newsletter no. 29, July 23rd 1978}.

\textsuperscript{179} The Chilean Committee of Norwich wrote to the ‘courageous union’: ‘Chilean unionists and workers will never forget your solidarity.’ \textit{Chilean committee of Norwich to RRSSEK, 6 Sept 78}, RREKSS.

\textsuperscript{180} Cornejo (CUT) to RRSSEK, 18.8.78, RREKSS.
Figure 4.4 Rolls Royce East Kilbride Joint Shop Stewards march in the anniversary demonstration of 1978 in London, just days after the engines were taken from the factory.

It was acutely obvious that the engines had become an emblem for the cause. Jim Tait expressed it thus:

The length the Chile regime went to has more to do with capturing world-wide prestige than four corroded jet engines.

It is an indication of how important these machines are, not as hunks of metal but as symbols of the struggle of progress against fascism in Chile itself.181

One leaflet stated that ‘by allowing the engines to be moved the Labour Government has sold the trades unionists down the river’.182

It did so in more ways than one.

As has already been noted, the Labour Government successfully stopped new contracts for a time, but it soon fell to trade unions to stop the delivery of the warships for Chile. Most of the vessels had been ordered well before Allende was elected, but were to be delivered into the arms of the new military government.183

As already observed, in 1974 the AUEW had resolved to stop frigates and submarines for Chile.184 Jimmy McCallum of AUEW TASS185 had argued that ‘[t]he only time frigates have been used was when they bombarded the port of Valparaiso’—the first city to fall in the coup. ‘The ships have been used since then as prisons and floating torture chambers for trade unionists.’186

It was noted furthermore by the TUC that ‘a substantial proportion’ of Chile’s population lived within range of the guns on these ships; it gave the ‘Chilean navy an unusual internal security capability’.187 A CSC brief further confirmed the nature of Chile and Britain’s military equipment trading relationship: ‘The Chilean Navy and Air Force are seriously dependent upon Britain for their continuing capacity to wage both internal and external war.’188

And yet, how the vessels were put to use was not necessarily the strongest factor for or against a boycott.

181 Fighting bloody hand of Chile’s fascists by Jim Tait. ‘Nevertheless, we did our bit. The blacking lit a beacon of international solidarity for the people of Chile.’ Somerville, in MacKay, ‘The Scot Who Humbled Pinochet Tells His Story’.
182 Rolls Royce Engines Snatched for Chilean Junta.
185 McCallum was the TASS office convenor at John Brown Engineering, Clydebank.
186 A trade unionist’s guide to the Chile issue.
187 Arms for Chile 1974, TUC [BLP International Department], MSS.292D/936.1/2, MRC, UW, Coventry.
188 Brief (29 April 1974) Britain and Chile, CSC, CSC/15/1, LHAS, Manchester.
4. Pinochet’s jets and Rolls Royce East Kilbride

Figure 4.5 A CSC poster on the submarines Hyatt and O’Brien.

Source: Poster: The Chilean people ask Stop the Subs, 1976, CSC, CSC/44/1, LHASC, Manchester.
Take the example of two submarines called *O’Brien* and *Hyatt* that were being built at Scott Lithgow on the Clyde. These submarines were due to be handed over to the Chileans in April and October 1974. On 26 September 1973, the wife of the Chilean naval attaché, who had just evicted Ambassador Alvaro Bunster from the Embassy in London, travelled to Scott Lithgow's Cartsburn Yard (Greenock) to launch the vessels. Inside the yard, trade unionists boycotted the launch and outside there was a demonstration organised by local labour councillors.

Would their initial reaction translate into sustained action?

The shipbuilding industry has vastly different work practices than the engine factory. Workers have one vessel to work on for a very long period (months at least, often years). Stopping work on that ship for political reasons would mean stopping work indefinitely. The editor of the Guardian commented in 1973 that 'union leaders are now faced with the bitter dilemma of not wanting to work on ships for the Junta but also not wanting to deprive their lads of the needed employment'.

After the initial, symbolic protest, AUEW members continued to work on the submarines. In fact, in May 1974 the 500 engineers at Scott Lithgow voted to go against the AUEW EC decision to stop work on warships to Chile. They would work the ships.

John Teegan, shop steward at the yard, said the decision was reached unanimously, partly because of loyalty to the firm, but also because blacking the submarines would put 'hundreds of men out of work'. It would directly impact the industrial conditions of the unionists. The CSC office released a statement: 'The workers obviously thought blacking the two submarines being built would lead to redundancies. As a similar decision on Tyneside proved, many workers share this fear.'

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189 Also on the Clyde, two Leander Class Frigates called *Condell* and *Lynch* were being built at Yarrows. These were armed with Seacat missiles and helicopters. The frigates were due to be delivered in December 1973–January 1974. ‘Open File’.


192 ‘Chile Waves’, *Guardian* [Manchester], 4 October 1973.

193 ‘Engineers Stop Work on Frigate for Chile’, *The Times*, 14 May 1974, 1.

194 ‘Engineers Defy Call to Stop Work on Chile Warships’, *The Times*, 16 May 1974.

195 Ibid.

196 Despite Gavin Laird and Ian McKee (district secretary) talking to the men, they still decided to ignore the AUEW Executive Committee’s decision. Gavin Laird, the Scottish regional officer of the AUEW, said there was no real chance of the men facing discipline for not following the AUEW Executive Committee order. Ibid. The NUS made similar statements about the men who disobeyed the National Executive Committee order.

197 *A trade unionist’s guide to the Chile issue.*
On the Tyne at Swan Hunter’s Wallsend dry-dock, a destroyer called *Almirante Williams* was undergoing a refit.198 AUEW workers continued working on her also, despite the black-ban directive of their union’s leadership. After she was launched, however, she soon appeared at Rosyth to load ammunition and stores. While there, she was blacked by TGWU workers, who eventually gave in and loaded minimal stores and water. They then warned other TGWU port workers that she would surely berth looking to load ammunition. *Almirante Williams* later appeared for trials in Portsmouth, where she was blacked by the AUEW. The AUEW Portsmouth district secretary, Rory McCarthy, was reported as saying that ‘the feeling among his members was so strong that they had felt like sinking the ship, which was, after all, what they had done to the fascists’ ships during the Second World War’.199

So, why do some unionists boycott, and others do not?200

The factor with the strongest influence is economics. Certainly, as Julian Amery MP put it, if Britain failed to supply the frigates and submarines the Government would be responsible for £50 million and the private firms would lose £10 million. More pertinently, he said the naval vessels ordered from Britain over the next two years were primarily from the Latin American market, and ‘there would be serious repercussions from other countries if we failed to fulfil the Chilean contract affecting future employment’.201 The prospect of job losses in the present and the future was of high importance when deciding whether to take action. Where action occurred it stemmed from radical individuals or groups in workplaces and almost exclusively where the sustainability of jobs and working conditions was not negatively impacted.

There is an exception to this: the pinnacle of the NUS exhibition of solidarity, when 600 unemployed seamen in Liverpool refused to sign on to Pacific Steam Navigation Company ships in 1975–76. It was not a perfect seal, stopping trade through the port as other NUS members and seamen sailed other ships to Chile in this time. Moreover, the men eventually sailed with the company when economic pressure became too great;202 but regardless of its faults, this truly is an exception to the rule.

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198 Another destroyer, *Almirante Riveros*, was there along with it.
199 *The Chile Monitor* no. 3, 1974, CSC, CSC/7/3, LHASC, Manchester.
200 Other actions on Chilean vessels include: 18 engineers walking off the frigate *Lynch* at Yarrows, 13 May 1974; a TGWU black at Rosyth in February 1974; Weirs Pumps in Glasgow blacked pumps for warships; and in 1976 the workers at Yarrow (Clydeside) blacked propeller shafts for Chilean vessels. The management at the firm then moved the shafts across Scotland to Rosyth, where TGWU workers promptly blacked them. *CSC Executive Committee: Minutes of the meeting held at Liberation on February 5, 1974; ‘Engineers Stop Work on Frigate for Chile’,* The Times, 14 May 1974; Chile Solidarity Campaign, *Chile and the British Labour Movement; CSC-Exec 26.8.76 Minutes*, CSC, CSC/1/10, LHASC, Manchester.
201 *Minutes of Executive Council. 7th February, 1974*, Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions, MSS.259/CSEU/1/1/10, MRC, UW, Coventry.
202 *To All British Seamen: Support your Executive Council, 1975*, CSC, CSC/28/6, LHASC, Manchester.
The boycott or lack of boycott against Chilean interests in Scotland enables various conclusions to be drawn. The implementation of direct action for remote political gain is dependent on a number of factors. The first is opportunity. Boycotts are opportunistic in the sense that a product must be present for the action to occur. While Brian Nicholson may have had influence on the London docks, without any Chilean trade passing through, he would only be able to spout rhetoric. Second, for some, ideology or morality was an obvious motivation: these ideas could bind a multifaceted political workforce in a coherent manner, leading to worker action. Third, union democracy and union structure could affect the chance of direct action occurring. The attitude of the union leadership towards rank-and-file actions and the penalties implicit in disobeying the union’s rules influenced the use of direct action. Decisions taken at a national level often highlighted the disconnection between the rank and file and the national office due to the cumbersome structures of unions. Fourth, individuals who had the ability to exploit opportunities, such as John Boyd of the AUEW, could affect the course of boycotts. Activists at ground level were powerless to stop his political manipulation at the national level.

But when all other factors are stripped away, the final and most important factor influencing direct action for political gain has already been outlined: the economic wellbeing of members. The direct economic impact on those who had tools in their hands influenced their action. Ian Schmutte has stated: ‘unions choose these activities, and indeed often choose not to act at the international scale for their own particular strategic and tactical reasons.’ That is, international action can be contingent on other pressures on union resources and risk to other union aims.

The RREK workers found themselves in a unique situation: they had a legitimate material to boycott and, in doing so, they would not cause major economic strife for themselves, their company or the nation. The blacking of the eight engines posed no threat to jobs at the factory. The loss of the Chilean contract alone would not produce substantial economic stress to Rolls Royce or the nation or even the loss of hours for the workers. On the other hand, the work (or perhaps the failure to stop work) of the engineers on the boats and submarines indicated that the economic loss to workers overrode ideology or moral commitment to cause.

203 It has been difficult to reconstruct in any detail what occurred in terms of the submarine and frigate boycott. Even Scottish activists at the time do not know the exact details. For example, Diane Dixon said ‘despite the fact [it was in the] east of Scotland, I couldn’t say I ever knew what the origins of it were … I don’t know, and I’d be making it up if I tried to tell you’. Diane Dixon, Interview by Ann Jones, 4 September 2007 [hereinafter Dixon Interview, 2007].

Not surprisingly, for direct action to occur in support of a remote political motive, the ‘bread and butter’ of unionists must not be threatened.

Figure 4.6 Thatcher and Pinochet discuss fighter jets.

Source: Untitled, Chile Solidarity Photo box 3, People’s History Museum, Manchester.
This text taken from *No Truck with the Chilean Junta!:
Trade Union Internationalism, Australia and Britain, 1973-1980*, by Ann Jones,
published 2014 by ANU Press, The Australian National University,
Canberra, Australia.