Conclusion

I am thinking of Diane, of Angie, Mike, Jerry, Bill, Adrian, Jeannie, Mavis, Peggy … People that you surely do not know. I think that we have never adequately thanked them.¹

On 3 June 2009, at the Moneda Palace in Santiago, Joan Jara rose to give a speech of thanks. She looked at Michelle Bachelet, the then President of the Republic of Chile. They had both been victims of the military dictatorship. The president had just signed the papers that would grant Jara Chilean citizenship. Jara finally—officially—joined a people she had talked about as her own for almost her entire adult life.

Jara told of the responsibility she felt when she left Chile after the coup and the death of her husband: solidarity work had given her something to live for. She spoke of the tours she made with Inti Illimani and Quilapayun. She said a generation of students heard of the coup in Chile and it ‘changed their vision of the world, and also changed the rhythm of their lives’. She spoke of the friends she made in exile, of many of them who gave years of their lives in support of the fight for Chilean democracy.

Among that list appeared two of the most prominent members of the solidarity movements in Britain and Australia: Mike Gatehouse and Mavis Robertson. Both have featured extensively in this book. These two activists, among many others, gave time, gave up income and also devoted ideological and emotional support to the Chile cause.

While I have argued that union action for Chile was constrained by the availability of resources, opportunities and primary union aims, these individuals acted very distinctly. They participated in the movement far beyond the time it was personally, politically, economically and emotionally useful for them to do so. They were motivated by ideology and/or a deep unrest over the abuses of the Pinochet regime (though the order of those reasons varied). The Chile campaigns in both Australia and Britain owed their success in part to these sorts

of organisers, including Mavis Robertson, Steve Cooper and Mike Gatehouse, who ‘attached an exalted significance’ to their cause.\(^2\) I used Hamer’s term ‘faddists’ to describe them in this book, but not in any pejorative sense: their importance to the movement was crucial. It was their duty to work for Chile and it was the right thing to do. Parkin has suggested that a ‘status inconsistency’ (the gap between skill level and actual income that is filled with a sense of duty or honour) was in fact a motivator for radical activists, and the cases contained within these pages would support that notion.\(^3\) The great positive force and energy that the hyper-committed ‘communicators’, as Waterman would call them, brought to their chosen cause gave the impetus needed to organise and ultimately harness the power of the labour movement.\(^4\)

While many comparisons draw conclusions on a theoretical level, which I shall do too, the parallel study of these two campaigns also elucidated some much more personal similarities. In fact, there were uncanny similarities within the personnel of the Chile movements in Australia and Britain through all the levels of organisation. Mike Gatehouse and Steve Cooper were both quiet, highly educated and hardworking. They were not necessarily very well connected themselves, but had the ear of people who were. They came to the campaigns after spending time in Chile during the Allende administration. Steve Hart and Andrew Ferguson were both passionately involved in politics. They were both from leading labour families with relatives in representative positions in government. Mavis Robertson and Alex Kitson were both strategically connected to the upper hierarchy of the labour movement, although Kitson’s connections were more institutionalised than Robertson’s. Furthermore, Robertson used her network for Chile on a much more regular, albeit less formal, basis. Judith Hart MP and Senator Anthony Mulvihill were used in both countries to furnish the campaigns with legitimacy in the public eye. Allan Angel was similar to Barry Carr: they were scholars of Latin America in universities with similar politics. Both spoke Spanish and acted as key communicators between sections of the Chilean exile community and their host countries. George Anthony and Brian Nicholson in Britain and Henry McCarthy and James Baird (and to a lesser extent, Tas Bull) in Australia played comparable roles: their politics and career courses were very different, but they were used to give the campaigns the seal of rank-and-file trade union approval. There is really only one who has no exact counterpart in the movements. It was the moral authority of Jack Jones

---

\(^2\) Also mentioned were Diane Dixon and Angela Thew, both of whom were interviewed for this thesis. Hamer, *The Politics of Electoral Pressure*, 1.

\(^3\) Parkin, *Middle Class Radicalism*, 53, 184, 189.

that placed him in an important position in the hierarchies of the movement. If Bob Hawke had showed interest in the Chilean situation, he may have held a similarly privileged position.\(^5\)

Their ideology differed, sometimes significantly, but they all shared a sense of moral purpose: a common belief in the justice of actions against the regime in Chile. They were also bound by the momentum of the cycles of protest established during the early 1970s. This primarily followed an annual calendar with a focus around key labour movement and historical Chilean dates. As is ascertained in Chapters Two and Six, the 11 September demonstrations were the main point around which activities clustered each year. Years of higher than normal activity appeared on significant anniversaries or around events such as the Chilean plebiscite of 1980. The campaigns’ focus and rhythm were also shaped by a long cycle of activist succession. There were few, if any, activists who remained imbedded in the social movement’s structure for the duration of the dictatorship, and very interestingly, the first major change of personnel occurred at roughly the same time in Australia and Britain at the end of the 1970s.

The cycles were comparable and the roles fulfilled strikingly similar, but one of the most obvious differences between the two campaigns was the integration of exiles into the committees. In both cases, the integration of migrants into the structure of the campaign was problematic, but the CSC in Britain was more successful in sustaining its broad front. This was achieved by effectively denying voting rights to exiles. Mike Gatehouse remembered:

> The Chilean People were in Chile, they were not here. The Chilean political parties were in Chile, they have external representation. But, if you involve them, then it ceases to be a solidarity campaign and becomes an exile movement. And we were absolutely clear that that would be wrong.\(^6\)

He went on to say that those campaigns that integrated Chileans floundered very quickly, and his observations are supported by the Australian example. In Australia, the attempted broad front collapsed under the disparate pressures of the two sets of political factions; however, to place the blame for this completely at the feet of the exiles would be hasty and incorrect, as politics on local, State, national and global levels also impacted on the Australian Chile campaign. Furthermore, due to the size of the population, there was more pressure to integrate Chileans in Australia, if only to have more hands on deck to help with organising.

---

5 Bramble, *Trade Unionism in Australia*, 82.
The size of the movement also influenced the depth of bureaucratic structure. In Australia, where the left was much smaller and split among distant cities, a national organisational framework was attempted but never achieved. Instead, the Australian campaign relied more heavily on the networking abilities of individuals. While the need for a formal structure for the campaign was less necessary in Australia, it did expose the movement to the dangers of instability and potential collapse if a strategic individual ceased participation. The British Chile Solidarity Campaign created a more complex organisational framework, at both local and national levels, and was much more stable because of it. By creating a self-perpetuating network of affiliates, the British campaign successfully exploited the bureaucratic and organisational (industrial national) based nature of the trade unions and enabled the systematic capture of a critical mass of supporters.

Thus the main difference in trade union involvement in Chile solidarity campaigns between Britain and Australia was the more ad-hoc nature of Australian unions’ and unionists’ involvement, compared with the more structured and hierarchical nature of the British trade union integration. Despite the British campaign’s ability to capture more mass support, the individuals with strategic knowledge of, and connections with, the labour movement were the most important acquisitions of the campaigns in both countries.

This book has provided a road map through the concurrent complex structures of the labour movement in Britain and Australia tracking the idiosyncratic paths between them taken by privileged actors—privileged, that is, by their knowledge of the organisational topography of the labour movement. These strategic individuals could bridge labour movement hierarchies and carry the Chile cause further than it otherwise might have achieved. The campaigns used these individuals to boost their positions within the hierarchy of aims of the labour movement. Inversely, some individuals used the movement to promote themselves. In Britain, George Anthony is a case in point: he reached an organising position above his usual level within the labour movement hierarchy, and also extended his own network and influence.

The exchange between individuals and the campaigns did not end there. Moral capital—that incalculable yet imperative resource as defined by Kane—was reciprocally granted between the campaigns and participants. While the moral capital of one person, such as Jack Jones, could be captured and used in order to legitimise the campaign, the reverse was also true. Though, the cause itself did not bestow moral authority on its participants per se, their involvement—that is, their stated aims and fulfilment of those aims—added to that individual’s store of moral capital. In the case of many individuals in the campaign, this could then be transferred into other organisations or positions in the future to benefit their careers.
While elucidating similarities between individual trajectories, this comparative study has also established a repertoire of activities on the historical record. This book has moved towards developing a typology of actions used by trade unions for external political causes in the 1970s. The majority of actions within that repertoire were indirect, and the majority of indirect actions were organised outside trade unions by either local or international solidarity organisations. These actions, described in Chapters Two and Six, included demonstrations, local and international conferences, cultural activities, tours and donations. The two movements’ repertoires were strikingly similar, though not identical, and often where they did differ it was due to scale.

Externally organised indirect actions took advantage of the opportunistic nature of union internationalism. Essentially, when a progressive union was petitioned for aid in the form of conference attendance, or support for a demonstration, they had no trouble fulfilling that request. These types of indirect actions against Chile, along with letter writing, telegram sending and resolution passing, represented the majority of solidarity actions in both Britain and Australia and most importantly had a minor impact on union resources. Indirect actions like this allowed unions to express their internationalist ideologies with little organisational expenditure and without risk to their members, and fittingly, the solidarity movement sought to routinise these actions into union business wherever they could.

Other so-called indirect actions attempting to create change in Chile through public pressure included delegations and they were organised from within unions with little interference from social movements. Of all the Chile actions undertaken by unions, these were the least opportunistic because the union had to create their own opportunity to travel. Delegations were a substantial and high-risk undertaking: it could never be known what the outcome would be and there was physical danger to the delegates and the people they met. Delegations such as those sent from Australia in 1974 and by the NUM in 1977 were extremely high-profile forms of solidarity that served the unions, Chileans and the solidarity movement very well, despite the fact they generated factional infighting in the union movement.

There were difficulties of sustaining or even starting a direct action for an external political goal. The only direct industrial protests that took place in solidarity with Chile were boycotts and scattered stop-work meetings, as described in Chapters Four and Eight. Essentially, the availability of union resources and the degree of threat to unions’ primary aims had an inverse relationship to the likelihood of action occurring. That is, the more activities were seen to require union resources (in organising time or money) or impinging upon the union’s

---

7 Though not in its entirety.
main aims, the less likely it was that unions would take that action.\(^8\) Solidarity with Chile was a just cause, but notwithstanding its role in fulfilling a sense of moral obligation and an ideological imperative to internationalism, it was still remote from the unions’ raison d’être.

As such, action for Chile needed almost no impediment for it to occur. Unions were risk averse. For this reason, the Chile campaigns in both Britain and Australia comprised mainly routine events. These were endorsable and easily undertaken by the labour movement without draining resources or imperilling jobs, wages or conditions. An exception to this was the grassroots boycott in East Kilbride, which was, significantly, pulled into line by the union hierarchy. Similarly, the unilateral action of the wharfies in Australia soon drew the ire of the peak union organisation. This suggests that with few exceptions, those most keen on preserving union business were to be found in its upper hierarchy.

It can be concluded, after examining the case studies and how they fit into the existing categories of political action, that international activity in unions is contingent on the sum of the incentives, capacities and impediments to the action.\(^9\) The CSC and CSCP were extremely successful mobilisers as they undertook activities that had little or no organisational cost for the unions and thereby made the expression of union internationalism easy. The Burgmanns have noted that militancy thrives in a favourable industrial climate, and the research contained within these pages provides highly detailed case studies that support this view.\(^10\) As long as industrial stability was not threatened, radical unions reacted favourably to the possibility of action for Chile.

It is evident throughout this history that actions undertaken by trade unions in solidarity with Chile were largely opportunistic, whether that opportunity was provided by an external source (such as participating in an organised international conference) or by the union’s industrial location (such as the Waterside Workers boycott). But also, below the opportunity, an ideological or moral sense of obligation to the cause was needed. The campaigns worked hard to sustain the sense of obligation and build a pool of goodwill towards the Chile cause. Left-wing unions were more likely to pursue an internationalist agenda and did not see a limit to their legitimate concerns.\(^11\) Their ideological concerns for the worldwide proletariat or socialism, peace or nonviolence predisposed them to actions for Chile.\(^12\)


\(^{10}\) Burgmann and Burgmann, Green Bans, Red Union, 14.

\(^{11}\) Anner, ‘Industrial Structure, the State, and Ideology’, 627.

Ideology, however, also caused the impure motives for some individuals’ and organisations’ involvement in the movement. ‘Chile’ was used to gain local political capital or as a weapon for internecine disputes. This was tantamount to a commodification of the Chile issue for political capital. It did not, in general, stop events from occurring or unions from taking internationalist actions but, as we have seen, it sometimes tempered action. It reduced solidarity effectiveness by self-censoring, limiting aims and ultimately resulting in the degradation of the broad front.

It’s hard to place rogue behaviour into the theoretical models of trade union action retrospectively applied by social scientists: to them, union actions with internationalist aims manifested as direct or indirect and union or social movement organised actions. The case studies published here demonstrate that industrial national unionism and social movement unionism existed concurrently within organisations. The case studies highlight the inability of static theoretical models to explain actions over time.

The role of pragmatism should not be underestimated, when it comes to union interaction, and more specifically union internationalism. And pragmatism is hard to work into a structural political model.

Unions or unionists who desire to reach a political goal used the methods that were appropriate and available to them, regardless of that method’s abstract place in a theoretical model of union organisation. Each union and every union action was idiosyncratic, influenced by a huge range of factors. The forces at work on the decision for international political action or inaction by unions are too complex to be attributed to an ‘ideal type’ of union decision-making and it should not be assumed that there was a unity of purpose behind them. The union activity that did take place for Chile could not be divided exactly into categories of direct and indirect political activity, social movement and industrial national unionism. The four categories overlapped.

In sum, I have put forward three overarching findings in this history and reiterated them in this conclusion. The first covers the factors that must be present for internationalist action to occur within a union: opportunity, ideology/moral convictions and little or no risk to union core aims and resources. The second finding concerns the manner in which individuals and the campaigns attracted legitimacy and moral capital in a self-perpetuating and mutually beneficial manner. Finally, this work suggests that existing theoretical models of union action require revision in order to be useful in understanding the relationship between solidarity campaigns and trade unions.

13 Deery, ‘Union Aims and Methods’, 60.
But quite aside from the arguments, this book has restored trade union international action to its rightful place in the history of the labour movement. High-profile strategic individuals and committed faddists were a minority in the movement. The majority of those who expressed solidarity were trade unionists.

The fact that they acted at all was a condemnation of the junta, and the very existence of a social movement denounced the crimes of the junta and increased pressure on the regime. If they did not succeed in restoring democracy, they certainly won a number of small victories, and one of those small victories was to do with trucks.

The slogan ‘no truck with the Chilean junta’ embodies the importance of unions to the Chile solidarity campaigns. The slogan itself stemmed from the first half of 1977 when rank-and-file Northampton lorry drivers declared they would not touch Chilean goods. On several occasions, they had refused to touch cargo at the Liverpool docks, and soon they produced stickers for their cabs that pronounced: ‘NO TRUCK WITH CHILE!’

News of their boycott and slogan spread to London, and the CSC office recognised an opportunity. Stickers were circulated through the campaign’s affiliates bearing the slogan (see Figure 1), and as a result, by 1979 the stickers were slapped on cabs and cars all around Britain. The stickers of the Northampton lorry drivers, though humble in conception, had a national and in turn international impact.14

Take a sticker, or take any one of the activities for Chile in isolation, and they can seem futile, or simply symbolic. But as Jack Jones said in 1975: ‘The routine and often modest activities of the campaign of solidarity with the people of Chile against the Junta when “totalled across the world” have made a very important contribution to easing the repression of the regime.’15

The stickers were one small victory of many in the Chile solidarity movement.

---

14 CSC Annual report, 1977; Annual General Meeting 1979: Draft Programme of Activities for 1979, CSC, CSC/1/14, LHASC: Manchester; Stick by Chile in the Cab, the Highway, May 1979, CSC, CSC/7/14, LHASC, Manchester.
15 ‘How Solidarity has Helped Chile Fight’, Record [TGWU], February 1975, 5.
Figure 2 A float hastily constructed for a workers’ parade in Glasgow by Chilean refugees.

Source: From the Collection of Manuel Ocampo, Glasgow (Undated).
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.