



h.g. Smith *Chile*
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

3 October 1980

Dear Mr Evans
Thank you for your letter of 22 September informing me of the resolution passed recently by your General Executive Council about the case of Miss Claire Wilson in Chile. You wrote in identical terms to the Prime Minister.

It might be helpful if I set out the facts of this case. Our Embassy in Santiago was approached by Miss Wilson's sister on 18 July asking for help to secure her release. Claire Wilson Bronfman is an Anglo-Chilean citizen and has lived in Chile all her life. The British Consul therefore had no formal standing to act on her behalf in the country of her other nationality. Nevertheless, he at once approached the Chilean authorities to demand consular access. He secured her release the same day. Neither she nor her family made any suggestion to the Consul at that stage that she had been maltreated.

Miss Wilson subsequently (on 22 July) left with the Embassy a copy of the writ of Habeas Corpus which she had presented to the Chilean courts, describing the treatment she had suffered and that of her companion, Sr Jose Miguel Benado. The Embassy sent a copy of Miss Wilson's statement to the Chilean authorities with a formal Note on 29 July, expressing concern at the methods of interrogation used, and, in particular, that Miss Wilson appeared to have been subjected to physical ill-treatment and considerable mental anguish, especially when forced to witness the torture of her friend, Sr Benado. We spoke in similar terms to the Chilean Ambassador when he called at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office on 6 August. In reply the Chileans have denied Miss Wilson's account.

/Reports

M Evans Esq



Reports of Miss Wilson's treatment did not reach us until after our Embassy had received a copy of her writ on 22 July. The Government's decision to lift the arms embargo had already been taken, and was announced on 22 July. Thus we had no knowledge of her case when the announcement was made.

You suggest in your letter that the Government suppressed information about this case. This is untrue. The arrest and detention of Jose Miguel Benado and Miss Wilson were public knowledge in Chile at the time and were reported both in the press and on the radio. It is not for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office but for the family to make such matters more widely known if they so wish. That this attitude was right is demonstrated by the fact that Miss Wilson herself did not wish to make a formal denunciation concerning her own treatment because she did not want adversely to affect Sr Benado's case. When we were asked about her case, we provided at once a full account of the action we had taken.

The Government condemns violations of human rights wherever they occur. We are not selective. However, we do not believe that the best way to indicate such condemnation is by withdrawing Ambassadors or interrupting trade. As far as Chile is concerned, we continue to take every opportunity in international fora, in concert with our European partners and in bilateral contacts to indicate to the Chilean authorities the serious view we take of their human rights performance.

Sincerely
J. Carrington
(CARRINGTON)

Received CF
29/9/80.

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10 DOWNING STREET

PRIME MINISTER

Moss Evans has written on behalf of the TGWU about the Claire Wilson case in July. In your absence I have asked a Foreign Office Minister to reply on your behalf.

Handwritten: Jane
att. 2/10/80.
MP

Handwritten: We only have a background note from FCO about Claire Wilson case but no other

25 September 1980 covers.

Handwritten: Could you please return the Moss Evans letter

Handwritten: Alan
30/9/80

25 September 1980

I enclose a copy of a letter to the Prime Minister from the TGWU, forwarding a resolution about Claire Wilson.

Could you please arrange for a Minister to reply on the Prime Minister's behalf. I should be grateful for a copy of the reply for our records in due course.

M.A. PATTISON

Paul Lever, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

FK

25 September 1980

I am writing on behalf of the Prime Minister to acknowledge your letter of 22 September in which you set out a resolution adopted by the General Executive Council of your union on the subject of Claire Wilson.

This is receiving attention and a reply will be sent to you as soon as possible.

M.A. PATTISON

Moss Evans, Esq.

Transport and General Workers Union

pls. att
Th. WINNICK
about Claire Wilson



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OUR REF ME/SF/ED

TELEPHONE 01-828 7788 TELEGRAMS TRANSUNION LONDON SW1 TELEX No 919009

YOUR REF

September 22, 1980.

R25

The Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher, MP
Prime Minister,
10 Downing Street,
London SW1

Dear Prime Minister,

TORTURE OF CLAIRE WILSON BY THE CHILEAN REGIME

At a meeting of the General Executive Council of this Union, in session last week, the Council expressed concern at the news of General Pinochet's latest atrocity in connection with the British citizen, Claire Wilson, on July 16.

Having given careful consideration to the circumstances surrounding this atrocity, the following resolution was passed unanimously:

"The General Executive Council is appalled by news of Pinochet's latest atrocity; the torture of the British citizen Claire Wilson on July 16.

It no longer comes as a surprise to us that the Chilean military dictatorship continues to torture people. But the most despicable and shameful aspect of this case is that the British Conservative Government knew about Claire Wilson's treatment almost immediately but kept it secret to protect their ever friendlier relationship with Chile's generals. The Tory Government did not even protest to the Chilean authorities until after they had lifted the embargo on arms sales on

Cont'd.....

July 22. We call for the resignation of Nicholas Ridley, the Minister who has been responsible for the policy decision to restore arms sales and for failing to inform Parliament or the public about Claire Wilson's case.

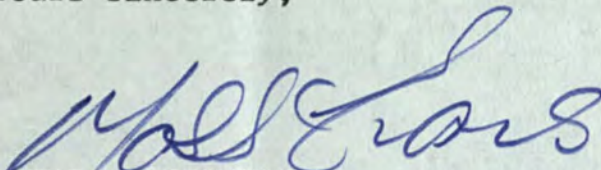
This kind of cynicism on the part of the Conservatives is beyond belief. They deliberately suppressed information about the torture of a British subject in order to step up trade and arms sales to Pinochet.

Meanwhile, Pinochet conducted a so-called 'plebiscite' for constitutional changes designed to make fascism legal, on 11 September - exactly seven years after Popular Unity was overthrown and President Allende murdered. This will prevent Chileans from presenting a legal alternative to military rule for nearly a generation.

In the light of recent events which illustrate the continuing brutality of the Chilean regime, the Government should now withdraw the ambassador as Labour did following the torture of a British citizen in 1975 and re-establish all embargoes and sanctions against the Chilean military dictatorship until human rights and democracy are restored."

It would be appreciated if you would advise us of what steps you propose to take in this matter.

Yours sincerely,



GENERAL SECRETARY

Chile



Prime Minister
You will wish to be aware
of the background.

(2) Foreign and Commonwealth Office
London SW1A 2AH

8 September 1980

Dear Michael,

Amul - 8/9

to: Amul,

ms.

CHILE : CLAIRE FRANCES WILSON

I enclose as requested a background note on the case of Claire Frances Wilson, the Anglo-Chilean, who claims to have been maltreated by the Chilean authorities in July. The matter was raised with the Lord Privy Seal by Mr Peter Shore during a call this morning. Mr Ridley, who was also present, has given several TV and radio interviews on this subject today.

Yours ever,

Miles!

M A Wickstead
Assistant Private Secretary
to the Lord Privy Seal

M O'D B Alexander Esq
10 Downing Street



CLAIRE FRANCES WILSON

On 18 July, HM Embassy in Santiago were informed by her sister that Claire Frances Wilson, a dual Anglo-Chilean national, had been detained by the Chilean authorities on 16 July. While the British Consul had no formal standing to represent dual nationals in the country of their other nationality, the Consul at once approached the Chilean authorities, demanded consular access and secured her release the same day. Neither Miss Wilson nor her family complained at that time of ill-treatment.

Miss Wilson called at the Embassy on 22 July and left a copy of a writ of Habeas Corpus she had presented to the Chilean courts seeking the release of her companion, Sr Jose Benado. It gave an account of her experiences in detention. On 29 July HM Embassy in Santiago, in a Note to the Chilean MFA enclosing a copy of Miss Wilson's statement, expressed their concern at the methods of interrogation used, in particular that Miss Wilson appeared to have been subjected to some physical ill-treatment and considerable mental anguish, especially when forced to witness the torture of Sr Benado. The Foreign Office made a similar protest to the Chilean Ambassador on 6 August. The Chilean authorities have maintained that 'Miss Wilson's accusations are absolutely false and unfounded'.

Amnesty International have now alleged that HMG deliberately withheld details of Miss Wilson's treatment at the time of the announcement on 22 July of the Government's decision to lift the arms embargo. However, news of Miss Wilson's treatment only reached the FCO on 23 July, the day after Miss Wilson had given the Embassy a copy of her writ on 22 July. The decision to lift the embargo had by then been taken and announced. In any case it was for her family to make the matter more widely known if they had wished : we do not publicise consular cases unless asked to do so. Miss Wilson's

/arrest



arrest and involvement with Sr Benado were in any case public knowledge in Chile and were reported in the Chilean media at the time. Amnesty did not raise the matter with the FCO until this weekend : in response to press enquiries, we have given a full account of the action we have taken.

Miss Wilson is third generation Chilean on her mother's side; her father was British. She has chosen to remain in Chile since the events in question, although she is of course at liberty to leave.



-8 SEP 1980

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