



*Alan Phillips, who has died aged 76*

I was saddened to learn of the death of Alan Phillips, a distinguished former Warwick student who died on 28 April 2023 after a short illness. Alan came to Warwick in 1966 to study Physics, becoming the first sabbatical President of the Students Union in 1968-9 and graduating with First-Class Honours in 1970. After working in industry for a period, Alan moved into the human rights sector, where his contribution to UK refugee and ethnic minority issues would be transformational. As general secretary of World University Service UK (WUS), he was instrumental in establishing a scholarship campaign to support Chilean academics and students whose lives were at risk in the wake of the September 1973 Pinochet coup d'état. In collaboration with the group Academics for Chile, established shortly after the coup by a network of UK academics familiar with the brutal repression on the ground in Chile, WUS would rescue 900 individuals and their families, enabling them to study and to rebuild their lives in the UK. Many would return to Chile, contributing to the reestablishment of democracy after the fall of Pinochet. Alan would later comment that, the WUS programme was 'one of the most complex and demanding ones I have been involved with in almost forty years of human rights work'. Following his years at the helm of WUS, Alan became deputy director of the British Refugee Council and then executive director of Minority Rights Group International. In 1998 he was appointed as the UK's special expert to the Council of Europe's advisory board on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, becoming its president in 2006.

It was as a result of his experience leading WUS that I first met Alan. His professional insights and unstinting support enabled me to research the long-term benefits of WUS's Chile scholarship programme, and to develop an oral archive of Chilean-UK exile memories in collaboration with the Museum of Memory and Human Rights in Santiago (both funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council). Alan oversaw the deposit of the WUS archive at the Modern Records Centre, enriching its holdings on Chile solidarity work in the UK. His commitment to refugee education was also evident in his involvement in the doctoral research

of Warwick student Zhen Yang, who is working with the London-based charity ReConnect to examine the importance of formal training for refugees seeking access to UK higher education.

Warwick awarded Alan an honorary doctorate in 2005, and his contribution to international human rights work has been widely recognized. In 1999 he was made CMG, and in 2010 Chilean President Michelle Bachelet bestowed on him the Order of Bernardo O'Higgins, the country's highest honour for non-Chileans.

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