The Bureau of the Socialist International held an extraordinary meeting in Amsterdam on 7-8 April. It was attended by over forty representatives of ten member parties of the International. The meeting took place at the invitation of the Dutch Labour Party, which was represented by, among others, Joop den Uyl (Parliamentary Leader) and André van der Louw (Chairman). The Chairman of the International, Bruno Pittermann, presided over the session.

The theme of the meeting was: 'Aspects of European Cooperation'. On this theme the socialist President of the European Parliament, Walter Behrendt, gave an introductory statement on West-European integration. Other speakers included Herbert Kriedemann (Vice-Chairman of the Socialist Group in the European Parliament), Joop den Uyl, André van der Louw and Hans-Juergen Wischneriski (SPD).

The discussions also covered broader European questions, including relations between social democracy and communist parties. It was the general view of the Bureau that member parties of the International should be free to decide their own bilateral relations with other parties but that before contacts were made by any individual party with parties in another country, the member party of the Socialist International in that country should be consulted first. It was also the unanimous view that social democracy neither should nor could be free to decide their own bilateral relations with other parties but that before contacts were made by any individual party with parties in another country, the member party of the Socialist International in that country should be consulted first. It was also the unanimous view that social democracy neither should nor could be free to decide their own bilateral relations with other parties but that before contacts were made by any individual party with parties in another country, the member party of the Socialist International in that country should be consulted first.

The Bureau decided that any revisions of the statute of the International should be postponed until after the forthcoming Vienna Congress in June. In this context the proposals of the British Labour Party for changes in the statute were withdrawn.

Greece
The Bureau discussed the question of Greece and adopted the following statement unanimously:

The Bureau of the Socialist International, at its meeting on 7-8 April 1972 in Amsterdam, expresses its full support for the Greek democratic resistance movements and expresses its opinion that arms deliveries to Greece in the present circumstances with the regime of the Greek colonels, would seriously weaken the chances for restoring democracy to Greece. The Socialist International supports strongly the demands of the democratic opposition in Greece for the abolition of martial law, release of all political prisoners and a return to democracy as had repeatedly been promised by the colonels to their democratic allies.

The Bureau also decided that Charalampos Protopapas, the Chairman of the Greek Democratic Socialist Union currently imprisoned by the Athens regime, should be invited to attend the Vienna Congress of the Socialist International in June, and that this invitation should be publicly communicated to the Greek regime.

Malta
The Bureau heard a report on the settlement of the dispute between Malta and the British Government from the International Secretary of the British Labour Party, Tom McNally. The latter reported that the Labour Government of Malta had obtained most of what it wanted, and that Dom Mintoff saw the seven-year agreement as the last such, to be used to broaden the base of the island's economy.

He said that the Labour Party in Malta deserved support and solidarity from the parties of the International in this task. The Bureau agreed that a letter be sent on its behalf to Dom Mintoff congratulating him on the settlement and asking him how the International could assist him in the future.

Turkey
Max van der Stoel gave a report on recent developments in Turkey, which he had just visited. He said that despite a clear tendency to authoritarianism, the situation in Turkey was not hopeless from a democratic point of view. He urged social democratic parties and governments to use whatever influence they had to prevent a deterioration of the situation and to bring about a return to normal parliamentary democracy. The Bureau agreed to keep the situation in Turkey under review.

Portugal
On 9 April two special committees of the International met, also in Amster-
May Day and the Liberation Movements

A short description of the way in which May Day, the traditional day of labour solidarity, has become the occasion for member parties of the Socialist International to express their solidarity with the liberation movements of southern Africa.

This year May Day has taken on new significance for the international socialist movement. For the first time it has been used by socialist parties in many countries to demonstrate solidarity with the liberation movements of Africa.

On May Day, many parties affiliated to the Socialist International mounted solidarity actions — demonstrations, collections, etc.—the financial proceeds of which will be donated to the liberation movements.

The proposal for a coordinated campaign of this kind came from the Dutch Labour Party (PvdA), and it was in Holland that the biggest action was staged.

Like several other parties the Dutch Labour Party has already been actively supporting the liberation movements for some years. The party has a special trust—the Evert Vermeer Foundation—for this purpose. It has also participated vigorously in the campaigns of smaller pressure groups to achieve specific aims.

For example, the Dutch Angola Committee has recently carried out a successful campaign against the import of Angola coffee. Before the campaign, more than half of Holland’s coffee came from the Portuguese colony; now not a single bean is imported from that source.

The new May Day action raised this earlier activity to a new stage. The party achieved a massive mobilization of progressive public opinion by a countrywide series of public demonstrations and, more importantly, by use of radio and television.

It is possible to use the broadcasting media for such purposes in Holland because the media are organized on the basis of a number of independent companies reflecting the broad divisions in society.

One of the largest companies is VARA. Although formally independent of political parties, VARA grew out of the Labour movement and remains close to it intellectually. It was

Swedish Socialists at Chilean May Day

European social democracy was represented at a great May Day rally of the Chilean Popular Unity in Santiago by a delegation of the Swedish Social Democratic Party, consisting of Party Secretary Sten Andersson, Bernt Carlsson (International Secretary) and Pierre Schori (Editor of the SAP’s journal Tiden). It was invited to Chile by the Popular Unity, whose leader, President Allende, addressed the rally.

on this station that the campaign in support of the liberation movements was featured prominently.

Throughout April the station was broadcasting regular progress reports on the preparations for the campaign, and on May Day itself a special two-hour programme was put out, in which the liberation movements themselves were profiled and information given on the actions taken by member parties of the International in other countries. The programme also contained some personal interviews with major figures of the liberation movements.

The programme also informed the public about how donations could be made to the cause, thereby linking up with the preparations made by the Dutch Labour Party itself. The party had already been hard at work organizing more than 100 meetings to promote the campaign. It had also set up 150 collection points for May Day.

One of the people responsible for coordinating the campaign in Holland was Relus ter Beek, International Secretary of the PvdA. He told me recently that the publicity given to the campaign by VARA was crucial to its impact. Only in this way could public interest be effectively generated, he said.

Relus ter Beek was confident that in the Netherlands the campaign would raise more cash than any solidarity campaign had ever raised before. The final total raised internationally will obviously depend on what other parties of the Socialist International achieve.

Several of them, notably the British and Scandinavian parties, are participating in the campaign within the framework of their already existing solidarity funds. The British Labour Party, for example, launched a special May Day appeal for funds as part of the campaign of the International, and Judith Hart, Chairman of the party’s Southern Africa Solidarity Fund, wrote in Labour Weekly: ‘We want to translate our goodwill into hard practical terms. That means money. If we are international socialists, the African struggle is our struggle. Their effort is our effort. Their victory is our victory.’

The eventual amount, which will be donated on the decision of the individual parties and without any strings, ought therefore to be impressive. Certainly it will represent an unprecedented act of solidarity with the African liberation movements.