

SOCIALIST AFFAIRS

Vol. XXII No. 5, May 1972

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SOCIALIST AFFAIRS covers the policies and progress of democratic socialist parties throughout the world.

Published by the
Socialist International
83a St. John's Wood High Street,
London NW8 5J7.

Tel. 01-586 1103, Telex 261735
Cables INTESOCON, LONDON

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Per annum rates :

*Ordinary subscription £4
(socialist party member £3)*

*USA & Canada \$12 (\$8);
Payment by sterling or dollar
cheque, postal order or
international money order—
payable to 'Socialist
International Publications'.*

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THE INTERNATIONAL

Special Bureau Meeting in Amsterdam

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 Wischnewski (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 make any ideological concessions to communism.

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 In this context the proposals of the British Labour Party for changes in the statute were withdrawn.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 Charalambos 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-

dam. These were the Portugal Committee and the sub-committee of the Bureau charged with examining the applications for membership of the International from the two Northern Ireland Labour Parties.

The Portugal Committee was attended by a number of leading Portuguese socialists, among them Mario Soares. The Committee heard a report on developments in Portugal and discussed ways in which closer co-operation could be achieved between social democratic forces in the democratic European countries and the Portuguese socialists. It agreed to make certain recommendations in this respect to the Bureau of the Socialist International. The meeting was also attended by observers from the International

Confederation of Free Trade Unions.

Northern Ireland

The Northern Ireland sub-committee was attended by representatives of both the Socialist Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) and the Northern Ireland Labour Party (NILP), in the persons of Paddy Devlin (Party Whip) and Douglas McIldoon (Party Secretary) respectively. The sub-committee, which consists of representatives of the British, Dutch, Israeli and Irish Labour Parties and the Italian Socialist Democratic Party, heard submissions in support of the applications which were received very sympathetically. Precise recommendations will be made by the sub-committee to the next Bureau meeting in London in May.
