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Editorial Committee: Gino Bianco, Parra, Giampiero Rolandi, Irving Howe.Editorial Assistant: Caroline Soper

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attitude, particularly the party’s boycott of European institutions.


The conference generated massive publicity, partly because in the week before President Pompidou had attacked it as an 'inopportune intrusion into French political life. Most observers agreed that his extreme reaction by the French President was an indication of the nervousness of the French right on the eve of the National Assembly elections due in March, particularly since all the opinion polls are showing the front of Socialists, Communists and left-wing Radicals led by M. Mitterrand far ahead of the Gaulists in public esteem.

It was made clear that no official contact would be made with the visiting heads of government, who would be treated as party 'militants', said Pompidou (a term simply meaning 'active party members' that was widely mistranslated in the English-language press as 'militants'). The Gaulist press even suggested that French relations with the countries concerned might be damaged by the meeting. In the case of Golda Meir an added twist was provided by the fact that French-Israeli relations have not been at their best since the 1967 war.

All five prime ministers involved responded to Pompidou's outburst by confirming that they would attend the conference nevertheless, and pointing out that the International has staged similar meetings in several capitals in recent years without provoking such a reaction.

In spite of what Pompidou said, the Party Leaders did not find themselves in quarantine in Paris. Apart from the hospitality extended by the French Socialists, they were also given a reception by the President of the French Senate, Alain Poher, who is the second man in the state after Pompidou, and incidentally not a socialist.

Wide-ranging
Discussions at
Bureau Meeting

The Bureau of the Socialist International met in London on 9-10 December, attended by thirty representatives of fifteen member parties. The following is a summary of the main decisions taken:

- An Extraordinary Bureau Meeting is to be held in Santiago on the invitation of the Radical Party of Chile in the first part of February.
- The Bureau discussed the splits and divisions in the Spanish socialist movement, which have resulted in there being at present three main factions in the movement, in exile and inside Spain. It was agreed that a special committee should be established and meet in Paris at the Party Leaders' Conference to examine this situation and to mediate between the groups. The special committee comprises the Italian Socialist Party (PSI), the Italian Social Democratic Party (PSDI), the Chile Radical Party,

- The Bureau considered the political situation in the Malagasy Republic, in which connection it heard a report from André Resampa, Leader of the Malagasy Socialist Union and a former Interior Minister, who attended the Bureau for this item by special invitation. Following this report, the B-Cenu decided to suspend SI membership of the former ruling party, the Social Democratic Party, and to recommend to the 1973 Council Conference that Resampa's party, the Malagasy Socialist Union, should be admitted as the member in Madagascar, subject to the Social Democratic Party having the right to appeal.

- The Bureau adopted the following statement on Vietnam:

  The Socialist International welcomes the move towards a settlement of the Vietnam war and urges the parties involved not to lose this opportunity of ending the suffering of the Vietnamese people.

  The International repeats its belief that a political solution would be greatly facilitated by the immediate cessation of the bombing of Vietnam by the United States, that all foreign military units should be withdrawn from Indo-China and that a coalition government should be established in South Vietnam to organise free elections as soon as possible and that prior to these decisions, all political prisoners should be released.

- The Bureau discussed the question of the levy on Jews wishing to leave the Soviet Union, on the basis of an introductory statement by the Israeli Foreign Minister, Abba Eban, who stated that his latest information was that the emigration tax had been firmly reimposed by the Soviet authorities. After detailed consideration of the question, the Bureau decided to reactivate its Study Group on Soviet Jewry (chaired by Robert Pontillon of the French Socialist Party), to produce an up-to-date report on recent developments.

- The Bureau also instructed the General Secretary of the Socialist International to prepare a report on seriously oppressed minority groups in all parts of the world.

- The Bureau also discussed the question of the rise of international terrorism. The Bureau decided to establish a special working party to study the question of international terrorism with Alex Kitson (British Labour Party) as Chairman, with particular reference to co-ordinating international trade union action.

**SOCIALISTS AND EUROPEAN UNITY**

**Freedom Before Commercial Interest**

**RAMOS DA COSTA**

A leading member of the Portuguese Socialist Action (ASP), which is a member of the Socialist International, explains his party's attitude to Portugal's relations with the European Economic Community.

We, the Portuguese Socialists, are wholeheartedly in favour of a Europe of working people. We give our backing with no mental reservation whatsoever to Portugal's membership of a European socialist community. We are convinced that such a membership would bring the Portuguese people benefits all along the line: economic, social, political, and indeed cultural, moral and psychological. Total integration would enable us to benefit from a range of financial and technical institutions so that we could catch up with other regional and national scale. Under such conditions there would indeed be considerably broader outlets for Portuguese products, whether in the field of agriculture, or food products, or industry. At the same time however, Portuguese Socialists think that member countries of a democratic European Community must not and cannot tolerate within their ranks a government such as that at present obtaining in Portugal, which is wanting entirely, we repeat, entirely, in the conditions that make up democratic legality. If a dictatorship can contrive, under certain circumstances, to appear other than what it really is, so that the democracies accept it within their society, then there is all the same urgent and absolute need for caution: the democracies may likewise appear other than what they are if they accept as a partner a fascist colonialist regime.

Senhor Caetano's government is aware that it would be refused total membership of the European Community. And it does not want to suffer a rebuff. That is why it seeks some solution at half cock: a customs agreement that would enable it to square the circle, that is to say, to be in the right society without, however, ceasing to be totalitarian, and to be European without ceasing to be colonialist.

Portuguese Socialists are unable to give their approval to such a solution. They hold to their opinion that it is immoral from the political point of view, and that it furnishes Caetano's government with yet another means of flouting the Portuguese people. Moreover, they consider that it damages the country's economy. The free trade agreement already has no effect on the products we export the most: these products will continue to be taxed through the customs, and their importation will be subject to quotas. This will above all be the case in France and Italy. France indeed produces the same articles, and is bound to favour French-speaking countries on the Mediterranean coast who are our competitors: Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria. As for Italy, it is common knowledge that this country produces large quantities of agricultural goods covering the same range as that of Portugal.

Portuguese Socialists find the clause on sensitive sectors particularly damaging, although nobody yet knows its exact significance. But rejection is warranted merely by knowing that textiles will be included in this category. We must not give up the advantage that accrues to us through the considerable export of these products.

The Portuguese government will alas be compelled for its part to accept the least advantageous clauses and agreements so as to avoid the difficulties created for it by the building of a European community. Above all it has to find ways and means of smuggling through its colonial war, a war which everybody condemns and which cannot be brought to a successful conclusion. It has to make people forget that it governs in an absolute manner, and that is not regularly elected. Forgetfulness has its price.

Portuguese Socialists accordingly appeal to the democratic and socialist conscience of their European comrades, whether they are in opposing or whether they share the responsibilities of power. It behoves no single socialist to place commercial interests