Bureau meets in Bommersvik
Disarmament conference, Global Challenge approved

At a magnificent lakeside setting in the midst of a Scandinavian forest, at its excellent training and recreational centre south of Stockholm, the Swedish Social Democratic Party (SAP), with its usual precision and efficiency, hosted the June 18-19 meeting of the Bureau of the Socialist International.

The school at Bommersvik, owned and operated by the Swedish Social Democratic Youth since the 1930s, is one of the finest facilities of its kind in the world, and has been the scene of several generations of meetings of the party and its fraternal organisations from around the world, including an SI party leaders’ meeting in 1979, as well as representing the ‘emotional heart’ of Swedish social democracy. It is the place, after all, where most of the party activists have their first residential training, not to mention other more recreational endeavours. The Bureau’s main themes were discussion of the world economy, in the context of the draft report submitted by the SI Committee on Economic Policy (SICEP), and key issues in disarmament, as elaborated by the SI Disarmament Advisory Council (SIDAC).

The meeting was opened by the Swedish prime minister, Olof Palme, with Willy Brandt in the chair.

Palme cited the 1889 SAP programme which described peace as the ‘foremost and indispensable prerequisite for the

List of participants

Socialist International Bureau Meeting Bommersvik, Sweden, June 18-19, 1985

Socialist International
Willy Brandt
Perthi Väinöläinen
Robin V. Sears
Luis Ayala

Australia
Australian Labor Party, ALP
R.F. McMullen

Austria
Socialist Party of Austria, SPÖ
Wolle Hacker

Belgium
Belgian Social Democratic Party, PS
Guy Spithoelm
Etienne Godin
Michel Van den Abeele

Belgium
Belgian Socialist Party, SP
Karel van Miert
Cosar Debunne

Canada
New Democratic Party, NDP/NPD
Tony Penikett
Soren Langdon

Chile
Radical Party, PR
Agapito Aquino
Alberto Ortiz

Costa Rica
National Liberation Party, PLN
Rolando Araya
Carlos Villalobos

Denmark
Social Democratic Party
Aker Jørgensen
Steen Christensen
Lasse Bødtker
Ejne Hovgaard Christiansen

Dominican Republic
Dominican Revolutionary Party, PRD
José Francisco Peña Gómez
Emilio Fernández
Fulgencio Espinal

Ecuador
Democratic Left Party, PID
Rodrigo Borja
Andrés Yánez
Javier Pérez
César Ventuña

Finland
Social Democratic Party of Finland, SDP
Kalevi Sorsa
Erkki Liikanen
Lauri Kangas
Allan Riosal

France
Socialist Party, PS
Jacques Hufnagel
Jean-Bernard Courtil

Germany, Federal Republic
Social Democratic Party of Germany, SPD
Wolfgang Rott
Hans Eberhard Dingels

Great Britain
The Labour Party
Gwyneth Dunwoody
Julie Turner

Guatemala
Democrat Socialist Party of Guatemala, PDS
Lars Pira

Ireland
The Labour Party
Tony Kinsella

Israel
Israel Labour Party
Neva Arad
Israel Gal

Italy
Italian Socialist Party, PSI
Margherita Bonier
Pado Vittorelli

Japan
Democratic Socialist Party, DSP
Etsu Ichikawa
Sachiko Taguchi

Lebanon
Progressive Socialist Party, PSP
Tarek Chehab

Malta
Malta Labour Party
Leo Brincat

Netherlands
Labour Party, PvdA
Jan Pronk
Maarten van Tras

Norway
Norwegian Labour Party, DNA
Gro Harlem Brundtland
Thorvald Stoltenberg

Paraguay
Revolutionary Front for a Republic, PRF
Eulogio Acevedo

Portugal
Socialist Party, PS
Rui Mateus

Senegal
Socialist Party of Senegal, PS
Abdel Kader Fall
Caroline Diop

Spain
Spanish Socialist Workers’ Party, PSOE
Juan Antonio Rivas
Manuel Calvo

Sweden
Social Democratic Party of Sweden, SAP
Olof Palme
Inger Carlsson
Börje Ahlstrom

Switzerland
Social Democratic Party of Switzerland, PSD
Gustav, Alberts
Bruno Scherbius

USA
Social Democrats, SDUSA
Joel Friedman
Sam Shube

Venezuela
Democratic Action, AD
Carlos Andrés Pérez
Reinaldo Figueiredo
Beatrice Rangel

Fraternal Organisations

IFM/SEI
International Falcon Movement/Socialist Educational International

IUSY
International Union of Socialist Youth

Iym
International Youth Movement/Socialist Educational International

IUSY
International Union of Socialists Youth

Consultative Parties

Cyprus
EDEK Socialist Party of Cyprus
Takis Hadjikyriakou

Italy
Educational International

Switzerland
Democratic Socialist International

Associated Organisations

SUCCE
Socialist Union of Central and Eastern Europe

Observers

European Parliament
Socialist Group
Rudi Arndt
David Blackman

Guests

Argentina
Mesa de Unidad Socialista
Guillermo Estevez Boero

Brazil
PTD
Leonel Brizola
Cibele Viana

Brazil
PMDB
Fernando Gasparian

Greece
PASOK
Penkès Nearchou

Nicaragua
FLSN
Bayardo Arose
Julio López
Jose Paseo
Maria Isabel Passo

Panama
PRD
Nils Castro

Tunisia
Parti Socialiste Destourien
Hedi Baccouche
Sakok Fayala

Uruguay
Colorado Party
Roberto Aslan

Uruguay
Movimiento por el Gobierno del Pueblo – Lista 99
Baltazar Prieto

USA
Democratic Party (also representing the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs)
Jack Loelke

Turkey
Bulent Ecevit
The Swedish party chairman declared that only democratic administrations are able to attract and sustain the support of their peoples, citing Chile and the governments of Eastern Europe as examples of regimes with no popular legitimacy. He told the Bureau that, despite the tremendous gains in recapturing democracy in Latin America and elsewhere in recent years, we must understand that the toughest challenges for them and for us were ahead, and that democracy must be constantly defended.

President Willy Brandt reviewed developments since the previous meeting of the Bureau in Rio de Janeiro, including the Party Leaders' Conference in Brussels and the important meeting hosted by the Argentinian president, Raúl Alfonsín, in Buenos Aires of the SI Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean.

Michael Manley (People's National Party, PNP, Jamaica), chairman of SICEP, introduced the main theme of the Bureau, Peace and the World Economy. Setting the work of the committee in context, he noted that while the Brandt Commission's first report had been an important step forward in the debate on world economic reform, there was now widespread disappointment because no effective action had been possible since its publication in 1980.

In the wake of these initiatives, SICEP had been set up by the SI Congress in April 1983. The draft report presented to the Bureau, Global Challenge, did not try to redefine the economic ideology of the SI; but to see whether focuses of common action could be found, and whether a democratic, socialist and international economic strategy could be formulated.

Manley urged both the secretariat and all member parties to ensure the widest possible distribution of the report within the SI and the wider labour movement, to leaders and rank and file. He expressed the hope that the work and conclusions of the report would eventually become reflected in parties' election platforms.

Wolfgang Roth (Social Democratic Party of Germany, SPD) said the report described the nature of economic interdependence in concrete and clear terms. He believed that joint action could and should be taken.

Carlos Andrés Pérez (Democratic Action, AD, Venezuela) spoke of the seriousness of the debt crisis in Latin America, which constituted a threat to the world's financial system. He referred in particular to the unacceptable demands of the IMF and northern banks, and the increasing role of protectionist measures taken by the European Community and the United States. The SICEP report must become a line of action, he concluded, since the credibility of the SI, and its ability to show the world that it offered an alternative, were at stake.

Jan Pronk (Labour Party, PvdA, Netherlands) spoke of the increased dangers of polarisation between those countries with prospects and those without - with only the former having any say in worldwide economic decision-making. This dualism was dangerous to future economic and political progress, he warned.

The discussion on peace was introduced by Kalevi Sorsa (Social Democratic Party of Finland, SDP), chair of SIDAC. Because of the sad state of disarmament negotiations, he said, SIDAC had decided to step up its activities. The mission to Moscow and Washington in March had been part of this, and future consultations with the Non-Aligned Movement and the UN were planned. He welcomed the resumption of the Geneva talks, but saw little hope of immediate results. He stressed that the negotiations should not be used as a cover for continuing the arms race. Only disarmament, not new exotic armaments, could secure peace and stability.

He called for a halt to the deployment of medium-range nuclear forces in Europe and an early agreement on the reduction of existing missiles; and the conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty, preceded by an immediate moratorium on nuclear-weapons testing.

He stressed the importance of the arms control talks in Vienna and Stockholm, because they could help initiate a positive chain reaction to obtain results in other fora.

Sorsa concluded by listing some of the issues to be discussed in the SIDAC draft report which would be submitted to the next SI congress. These included, in addition to the issues currently the subject of negotiations, the question of arms transfers and the humanitarian treatment of civilians in armed conflicts, the role of the UN in peace-building and peacekeeping, and the relationship between disarmament and development.

Following a report to the
Disarmament conference, Bureau in Vienna

In addition to SI member parties, senior representatives of the United States, Soviet and Chinese governments of the United Nations and the Non-Aligned Movement will attend a two-day disarmament conference in Vienna on October 16-17. It will be held in conjunction with this year's second meeting of the Bureau on October 15-16. Both meetings are hosted by the Socialist Party of Austria (SPO).

The disarmament conference is the second to be convened by the SI (the first was held in Helsinki in 1978). It will consider developments in the field of arms negotiations, including the questions on the table at the Geneva, Stockholm and Vienna fora. The SI Disarmament Advisory Council (SIDAC) will also present elements of its draft report for the next SI congress, and report on its mission to Moscow and Washington earlier this year and its contacts with the Non-Aligned Movement and the United Nations.

The main theme of the Vienna Bureau meeting will be multilateral cooperation, in recognition of the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations this year and the growing pressures on the UN system.

SICEP's two-year study

Dozens of experts from SI member parties and trade unionists from around the world contributed to Global Challenge, the product of two years of work by the SI Committee on Economic Policy, SICEP.

A key contributor to the report, and author of its initial drafts, is Jan Pronk, the former Dutch development overseas development spokes­man of debt, at the invitation of the United Nations this year and the growing pressures on the UN system.

Call for debt conference

SI President Willy Brandt and Michael Manley and Carlos Andrés Pérez, both SI vice­presidents, on July 1 called for an international conference of governments in North and South to 'seek agreement on a comprehensive analysis of the [deb] crisis and specific solutions appropriate to its urgency'. Failure to act, they warned, could trigger an unprecedented financial crisis.

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French Socialist Party, followed by a second two-day meeting in Kingston, Jamaica, later that month, at the invitation of Michael Manley and the PNP. Meetings were again held in Brussels and London, and the final draft was presented to the Bureau at its June 1985 meeting in Bommersvik, Sweden.

It is anticipated that the committee's report will be revised in advance of the next congress of the Socialist International, where its proposals and a programme of action to be drawn from them will form an important part of that meeting's agenda.