

Bureau Meeting in London

The first meeting of the Bureau of the Socialist International since Labour returned to power in Britain, was held on Sunday 31 March in London. The meeting was attended by representatives of member parties of the Socialist International from Austria, Belgium, Canada, Chile, Finland, France, Germany, Great Britain, Israel, Italy (both the Socialist and Social Democratic Parties), Malta, Netherlands and Sweden. The International Council of Social Democratic Women was also represented. The Chairman of the Socialist International, Bruno Pittermann, presided.

Committee on Chile

The Bureau decided to establish a permanent committee on Chile consisting of member parties which were represented on the Socialist International mission to Chile last October (these included the French Socialist Party, the Italian Socialist Party, the Dutch Labour Party and the Swedish Social Democratic Party also representing the Nordic parties), together with the Italian Social Democratic Party, the British Labour Party, the Radical Party of Chile, the Finnish Social Democratic Party and the German Social Democratic Party. This committee will meet and prepare proposals for action to be undertaken by the Socialist International with regard to the political and humanitarian problems in Chile.

Spain Committee

The Bureau established a Spain Committee of the Socialist International which will watch developments inside Spain and recommend to the Bureau and member parties of the International action to be taken to help the Spanish member party of the International, the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE), and aid the return of democracy to Spain. The Bureau heard a report on the present situation in Spain from a representative of the PSOE living inside Spain who attended as a guest.

Seminar in Jamaica

On a proposal from the Socialist International's Study Group on Socialist Strategy for the Third World, the Bureau approved the holding of a seminar in Jamaica in November of this

year to be jointly sponsored by the Socialist International and the People's National Party of Jamaica (a member of the International). The general theme of the seminar will be 'Emancipation and Social Justice in Latin America and the Caribbean—what are the prerequisites?'

Africa Project of the ICSDW

The Bureau accepted the first stage of the International Council of Social Democratic Women's (ICSDW) proposed four-year project for Africa. The objective of the project is to intensify the ICSDW's efforts in this area to establish contacts with progressive women's organisations. The project will also study various trends of thought among women in Africa and the role of women in African society.

Finance Committee

The meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee of the Socialist International meeting on 30 March completed the draft of the new Statute of the Socialist International which will now be sent to member parties for their consideration.

Statements on Chile and Portugal

The Bureau adopted the following statements on Chile and Portugal:

Chile

The Socialist International protests in the strongest terms against the continued imprisonment by the Chilean military junta of many thousands of Chilean citizens whose only 'crime' has been their association with, or support for, the progressive and democratic policies of the former democratically-elected government of Unidad Popular headed by the late President Allende, and their opposition to the overthrow of democracy in Chile.

The political prisoners are held in the most inhuman and degrading conditions in concentration camps, torture is frequently employed by the regime against its opponents and people are executed summarily by military courts. The Socialist International urgently calls for the withdrawal of all fabricated criminal charges against the prisoners and calls for their immediate release.

The Socialist International states that this situation derives from a state of internal war and is inconsistent with both Chilean National Law and International Law.

Concerning the rescheduling of Chilean debts, on which the so-called 'Club of Paris' reached an agreement in principle last week. The Socialist International expresses its opinion that the public statement made by the Chairman of the Club of Paris about the need for a restoration of human rights in Chile is not, as such, sufficient. The Socialist International therefore calls upon the participating countries and especially upon those with governments in which socialist parties are represented, to make the question of Human Rights a condition of the negotiations which are taking place on a bilateral basis with Chile.

Portugal

The Socialist International has followed closely the recent events in Portugal, characterised as they are by a grave division within the Army which, associated with the colonial problem and with the economic, financial and social crisis, could lead to a change of government within the country.

In these circumstances the Socialist International, which supports the Portuguese Socialist Party, reaffirms its hope that a democratic government may soon come to power in Portugal—one which respects human rights and the principle of self-determination and independence of its subject peoples, and which therefore is capable of putting an end to the growing isolation of Portugal on the international scene.

The Socialist International appeals strongly to the governments of member countries of NATO to exercise their influence in this direction.