



When in Rome: (from left) Kalevi Sorsa, Franco Nicolazzi, Bettino Craxi, Willy Brandt

Council focus on Mediterranean and Middle East

'Peace, Democracy and Human Rights in the Mediterranean' was the main theme of this year's first Council meeting, held in Rome on 8-9 April at the invitation of the SI's two member parties in Italy, the Italian Socialist Party (PSI) and the Democratic Socialist Party (PSDI).

Chaired by SI President Willy Brandt, the meeting was attended by nearly two hundred delegates and guests, including twenty-six SI vice-presidents and party leaders, and was thus one of the SI's largest outside the triennial congress.

In the public opening session on the morning of 8 April leaders of the member parties from the Mediterranean region introduced the main theme. Subsequently, the conflicts in the Middle East – inevitably in conjunction with the main theme – provided a second focus for the debates. Other main items on the agenda were disarmament issues and the situations in Latin America and the Caribbean and Southern Africa.

The Council also heard reports from the Committee on Economic Policy (SICEP) and the Committee on the Environment, which had held its first meeting on the eve of the Council.

A region in crisis

In his opening remarks, Brandt referred to the last time the SI had gathered in Rome, in 1977,

when one of the themes had been 'Europe and the Mediterranean area'. The minutes of that meeting had recorded that 'It was generally agreed that the problems of the Mediterranean area could not be viewed in isolation from those of Europe' and that 'Hopes were expressed that detente might be extended from Europe to the Mediterranean area'. 'Unfortunately', said the SI president, 'meanwhile we now all know that there have hardly been any elements of detente which could have exercised an advantageous impact from Europe on other parts of the world'.

Following Brandt, Bettino Craxi and Franco Nicolazzi, the general secretaries of the PSI and PSDI respectively, welcomed the delegates to the Italian capital.

Commenting on the political crisis in Italy, Craxi – who had submitted his resignation as prime minister on 3 March following disagreements with his Christian Democrat coalition partners – regretted that the Council meeting coincided with a rather disturbed moment in Italian politics. 'On the other hand, for an Italian system which tended rather to instability, almost four years without any serious crises have ended up provoking withdrawal symptoms ...'. (The impasse eventually led to the dissolution of parliament and early elections on 14 June.)

In his intervention Franco

Nicolazzi stressed the point that the political crisis in the Mediterranean region was jeopardising Italian efforts to strengthen European political unity and ensure greater prosperity and the mutual security of all countries in the region.

On the Middle East conflict, he noted: 'We recognised the Palestinians' right to their homeland, but the way to obtain it cannot be that of war, nor – worse – of terrorism. ... Only negotiations aiming at a common goal for all countries in the Mediterranean area can have a positive influence on the future of the Middle East region and the entire Mediterranean basin. ... We must ensure that the way of negotiations prevails over the practice of terrorism in order to bring peace back.'

Craxi's opening speech also dealt with the many sources of tension in the region. In this context he elaborated his recent proposal for a Euro-Arab contact group, which could be an informal grouping of 'all countries which are not themselves involved in conflicts in the Mediterranean and which wish to contribute in a concrete way' to resolving problems.

This political initiative, while neither an alliance nor a regional organisation, was also aimed at 'relaunching the goodwill between Europe and the Arab world, and using its synergy to create a centre that may encourage detente and peace in the region'.

Reducing tension

The debate on the manifold problems of the Mediterranean – political, economic, social, environmental – was introduced by delegates from the SI parties from the region. Among the main contributors were Lionel Jospin, first secretary of the French Socialist Party (PS); Alfonso Guerra, deputy general secretary of the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE) and deputy prime minister; Carmelo Mifsud Bonnici, leader of the Malta Labour Party and prime minister; Erdal İnönü, leader of the Social Democratic Populist Party (SHP) and Haluk Özdalga of the Democratic Left Party (DSP) of Turkey; and Panos Hadjiyannis, of the EDEK Socialist Party of Cyprus.

Guerra said that in analysing the situation in the region, three different conflicts must be recognised: the East-West conflict, external to the region but affecting it nonetheless; the North-South conflict, since the Mediterranean formed a kind of frontier or contact zone between developed and developing countries; and the numerous confrontations which existed within the region itself.

Jospin, describing the region as 'a reality which has exploded', pointed out that the Mediterranean was only a geographical area, not a political unit or even a cultural one. 'It is a meeting point of different cultures, where internal and external ambitions clash, and whose many contradictions are difficult to unravel.' It was also a region which reflected many of the world's problems.

Albert Carthy

As SOCIALIST AFFAIRS went to press, we heard the sad news of the death on 1 July, of former SI general secretary Albert Carthy.

A full appreciation and obituary of Albert Carthy, who was general secretary from 1957 until 1969, will be included in issue SA3/87.

SI NEWS

ROME COUNCIL MEETING

He held out a vision – to which the SI should dedicate its work – of the Mediterranean as ‘an example of concerted development between North and South, an area of exchange between humanist Islam and the rationalist West, a place



Lionel Jospin

where fruitful exchange between different cultures could take place, and an area of peace and democracy’.

The chair of the Study Group on the Mediterranean, Margherita Boniver, gave a detailed report of the group’s first meeting, held in Rome on 6 April.

The Study Group, she said, was aware that there were many aspects to the crisis of the Mediterranean. For this reason it had decided to concentrate on five main areas: the search for peace and security in the region; economic cooperation within a large family of nations in which could be seen all the elements of the North-South conflict; democracy and human rights, including the rights of women and an examination of religious and political fundamentalism; the environment; and terrorism.

As to the latter, Boniver reiterated the phrase used by Craxi in a recent speech to parliament, that terrorism ‘has by now become a kind of “surrogate war”’. Action by individual countries was entirely inadequate to oppose a phenomenon which could only be defeated through close cooperation among all countries; nor would it be crushed by military reprisals.

Dialogue in the Middle East

The second focus of the Rome



Margherita Boniver

meeting was the critical situation in the eastern half of the Mediterranean, in particular the three major, and interrelated, conflicts: that between Israel and one section of its Arab neighbours, the war and civil war in the Lebanon, and the Iran-Iraq war. The persistence of these and other conflicts in the region made the Middle East ‘one of the most dangerous regions in the world’, according to Hans-Jürgen Wischnewski, chair of the Middle East Committee (SIMEC).

Wischnewski reported on the meeting of SIMEC on the eve of the Council, at which, for the first time, two Palestinian personalities – Hana Siniora from the West Bank and Faiz Abu Rahme from Gaza – as well as a delegation from the Communist Party of the Soviet Union discussed the possibilities of a peaceful settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, especially the proposals for an international peace conference. (*For a full report of the SIMEC meeting, see page 27.*)

‘Although the SI could not be a substitute for an international peace conference’, Wischnewski remarked, it could provide a framework ‘to help bring people together who must talk with each other to bring about peace’. The Rome meetings marked a significant new departure in this respect.

Both the SIMEC and Council meetings were attended by Shimon Peres, the leader of the Israel Labour Party and his country’s foreign minister. He said that despite all the difficulties, some progress was being achieved in the direction of



Alfonso Guerra

comprehensive peace in the Middle East. During the past two-and-a-half years, while participating in the national unity government, his party had been able to prepare the ground for negotiations within the framework of an international peace conference.

He stressed that the most important principle of the present proposals – which were strongly endorsed by a number of speakers, as was Peres’ role in furthering the peace process – was that they did not propose a plan before the negotiations, but proposed a plan which would allow negotiations to begin.

Hana Siniora also addressed the Council meeting, expressing his satisfaction that, for the first time, Palestinians and Israelis were trying to work together to encourage the peace process. The right to self-determination of both peoples must be accepted and recognised by both. He expressed the hope that the SI would be able to contribute to resolving some outstanding issues regarding a peace conference, such as the question of representation of the Palestinian people.

New appeal to superpowers

The resolution on disarmament adopted by the Council (*see page 34*) focused mainly on European issues. As explained by Kalevi Sorsa, the chair of the Disarmament Advisory Council (SIDAC), this had been considered timely since, following the near-agreement in Reykjavik on the elimination of intermediate-range nuclear forces, Europe was now the region where real progress was possible and also necessary. It was the SI’s view that such an agreement should be signed now, without any linkages. This should then lead to the dismantling of shorter-range nuclear

systems and reductions of conventional forces.

These points had been anticipated by Willy Brandt, who in his opening remarks had said that ‘a zero option for intermediate-range nuclear weapons would signify that ... for the first time in the history of East-West relations since 1945, weapons which had been developed, produced and stationed at great expense would be withdrawn and scrapped by virtue of agreement. This would be a victory by rationality over the inherent dynamism of the arms buildup.’

Solidarity with Paraguay ...

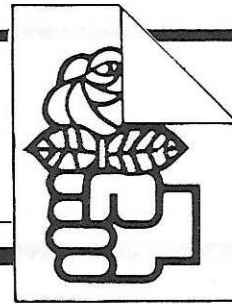
The Council discussed at length developments in Latin America and the Caribbean and adopted resolutions on Paraguay, Chile, Central America, El Salvador and Guatemala (*for full texts, see page 35*). It also heard a report from the SI mission which had visited Paraguay on 5-6 February and accepted its recommendations (*see page 32; and SI NEWS 1/87, page 26*).

Fernando Vera, the leader of the Revolutionary Febrerista Party (PRF), the SI’s member party in Paraguay, said that the mission had received very wide attention in his country, and had demonstrated the will of the international community to express solidarity with the forces struggling against the Stroessner dictatorship and for the democratisation of Paraguay.

... and Southern Africa

The co-chair of the Southern Africa Committee (SISAC), Joop den Uyl, reported on a meeting of the SISAC contact group with representatives of the governing parties of the Front Line States and the liberation movements in Lusaka, Zambia, on 20-21 March (*see page 33*).

This meeting, which had further strengthened the SI’s solidarity with the anti-apartheid struggle, he said, ended with complete agreement on the need for binding sanctions against the South African apartheid regime and for increased support to the African National Congress (ANC) and SWAPO of Namibia.



Dakar to host Council meeting and Africa conference

As reported in *SI NEWS 4/86*, the SI Council meeting in Bonn accepted the invitation of the Socialist Party of Senegal to host this year's second Council meeting, in Dakar on 15-16 October. The party will also host a major two-day SI conference on democracy and development in Africa in advance of the Council, on 12-13 October.

President Abdou Diouf of Senegal, general secretary of the Socialist Party, will address the Council meeting, whose main theme will be 'Africa in Crisis - The Socialist Alternative'.

Economic, political and environmental issues are expected to dominate the deliberations, in the course of which the Study Group on Africa (SISGA) will report on its earlier conference and the Southern Africa Committee (SISAC) will report on its work and on recent developments in the region.

Dialogue with Africa

As explained by the study

group's two co-chairs, Peter Jankowitsch and Djibo Kâ, the SISGA conference should offer possibilities for the SI and its member parties to develop a dialogue with progressive political forces in Africa, many of which were seeking to develop contacts with the International. The organising of such a conference has been one of the main tasks which the study group set itself when it was set up by the Vienna Bureau in October 1985.

Among the likely areas for discussion will be the link between economic development and the introduction of democracy, agricultural problems, the external debt burden, desertification, and regional economic integration.

The Dakar meeting will be the first meeting of the Council in Africa since 1978, when the Socialist Party of Senegal also hosted a Bureau meeting in Dakar.

Work on Eastern Europe

A number of SI member parties and the Socialist Union of Central and Eastern Europe (SUCEE), an associated organisation of the SI, have held two meetings to exchange information on and discuss developments in Eastern Europe.

The two meetings, on 4 December in Brussels and on 8 April in Rome (in conjunction with the Council meeting), were convened by SI general secretary Pentti Väänänen, who had been asked by the Council in October 1986 to invite interested parties to discuss the situation in Eastern Europe.

At the Rome meeting, member parties of SUCEE presented reports on the developments in their respective coun-

tries, in particular in the light of the economic and political changes being introduced in the Soviet Union under the leadership of Mikhail Gorbachev.

Remembering Hungary

At Bonn, SI President Willy Brandt, commemorating the thirtieth anniversary of the Hungarian revolution of late 1956, said that democratic socialists had not forgotten the people of that country or the other countries of Central and Eastern Europe.

He reaffirmed in this context that reducing tensions between East and West and fighting for peace - one of the SI's most cherished aims - 'must be connected to fighting for human rights'. That is why the new Committee on Human Rights (see *SI NEWS 4/86*, page 27) would also focus on the situation in Eastern Europe.

Resolutions adopted by the Council of the Socialist International

Rome, 8-9 April 1987

Resolution on disarmament

With the impasse that has marked arms control in the 1980s, it is vital to exploit all possibilities of making headway. The Socialist International welcomed and endorsed the results of the Stockholm Conference on Security and Disarmament in Europe (CDE), involving as they do steps in the right direction towards enhanced confidence- and security-building in Europe.

The Reykjavik meeting between the leaders of the Soviet Union and the United States showed the possibilities of radical disarmament measures. Once again the SI urges all parties concerned to work for the implementation of the understandings that were within reach in Reykjavik, such as a drastic reduction in strategic systems and the elimination of the US and Soviet intermediate-range nuclear forces (INF) in Europe. We also reiterate our support for a comprehensive test ban.

The SI welcomes the readiness now being shown by both parties to conclude a separate agreement on INF, based on the zero option in Europe. We strongly appeal to the Soviet Union and the United States to sign such an agreement now. We unanimously reject all new preconditions from any country concerned, including European countries, for the conclusion of a separate INF agreement. At this juncture, such new preconditions would prevent a breakthrough. The elimination of intermediate-range nuclear systems in Europe should not be used as a pretext or an instrument to install new kinds of shorter-range nuclear systems.

After the conclusion of an INF agreement, it is also necessary to start negotiations on reducing shorter-range nuclear forces (SRINF) deployed in Europe. The problem of imbalance in the shorter-range nuclear systems and conventional capabilities must be solved in the

near future.

The disarmament process should aim at increased political confidence and military stability at lower levels of armaments. It has to be based on the principles of reductions that are advantageous for all parties concerned and of security in common. As far as the military factor is concerned, stability should be based on comprehensive military assessments, not on mere numbers games.

The conclusion of the Vienna negotiations on Mutually Balanced Forces Reductions (MBFR) with some concrete results would be a positive sign in the process of devising a viable European arms control agenda. The ensuing negotiations on real arms reductions and military constraints should use the framework of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), so that all participating states have a say in matters that affect everyone's security. Also within this framework, the military alliances could hold direct talks.

The negotiations on conventional disarmament and on confidence- and security-building measures in Europe should take into account battlefield nuclear weapons as well, due to the fact that many modern systems have both a nuclear and a conventional capability. A Central European corridor free from nuclear weapons, as proposed by the Palme Commission and endorsed both by the SI and by the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD) and the Socialist Unity Party (SED) of the German Democratic Republic, would fit into the aim of conventional disarmament and confidence- and security-building in Europe.

The SI repeats its appeals to the US and Soviet governments to refrain from developing, testing and deploying new anti-missile and space weapons. They must strictly abide by the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty regime, acknowledging that the treaty prohibits the

development and testing of all other than fixed land-based ABM systems. The parties should jointly work out an understanding on the border-line between research and development, and between ABM components and sub-components.

The SI challenges all states and all political forces to grasp the momentum. The time has come for real progress.

Resolution on Central America

The Socialist International, committed to the search for peace in Central America, is of the opinion that in the last few months prospects have increased for a negotiated settlement of the conflict in the region.

In the light of this development, the Socialist International Council:

(a) welcomes the initiative taken by the secretaries-general of the United Nations and the Organisation of American States (OAS) to join the foreign ministers of the Contadora Group in a mission to Central American countries in order to attempt to relaunch the Contadora peace effort;

(b) notes that the meeting of the European Community, the Central American countries and Contadora Group in February has opened a new phase in the process of increasing political dialogue and economic cooperation which began in San Jose in 1985, and has confirmed the European Community's support for the Contadora peace initiative;

(c) expresses its support of the initiative of President Oscar Arias, namely his proposal of a peace plan which is a positive and constructive element contributing, in the true Contadora spirit, to the effort for peace, democracy and stability in Central America;

(d) expresses its satisfaction with the stand taken by the United States Senate in favour of a political solution of the Central American conflict;

(e) regards the above as a demonstration that the Contadora initiative maintains its momentum as the Latin American alternative for a solution of the conflict;

(f) deplores that the political will to reach a peaceful solution is not met with a like spirit in the US administration, which persists in its pursuit of a military solution to the conflict, in blatant violation of the rules and principles of international law and the UN Charter;

(g) calls on the Central American governments to move towards peace, and to unite their wills to carry out the necessary actions to ensure a peaceful solution to the conflicts; the forthcoming summit of Central American presidents in Esquipulas, Guatemala, in June, could be the venue where the peace measures so sorely needed by Central American peoples could begin to materialise.

Resolution on Paraguay

The Council of the Socialist International reviewed in detail the serious social and political situation in Paraguay, a country in the grips of an oppressive dictatorship for over thirty years.

It based its conclusions on the report submitted by the SI mission which visited Paraguay on 5-8 February.

In particular, the Council was informed of the serious violations of human and political rights constantly taking place in Paraguay, and which have been condemned in many international fora.

The state of siege which, according to Paraguay's own constitution can only be imposed for a limited period of time in the event of international conflict or domestic strife, has been enforced without interruption for the past three decades. It is the dictatorship's most extreme measure of repression, applied to curtail the rights of individuals, political parties and social organisations and deprive them of the protection of the law.

In addition to the state of siege, constitutional freedom and guarantees have been curtailed by special legislation (Laws 209 and 294) based on the concept of 'crime of opinion'. The arbitrary enforcement of these laws represses every manifestation of political and social opposition as if it were subversive activity.

Arbitrary arrests and trials, torture, police brutality in the suppression of peaceful citizens' meetings, and even the disappearance of prisoners and the murder of social and political militants have characterised the fate of members of the democratic opposition to Paraguay's dictatorship. There are also thousands of exiled Paraguayans, from outstanding intellectuals to political leaders of various ideologies, who are denied the right to live in their own country.

The restraints and outright denial of fundamental rights include freedom of the press and of the dissemination of ideas. Both print and broadcast media are either repressed or controlled by the dictatorship. The country's largest daily newspaper and radio station have been closed down.

The mission also observed the serious economic crisis, with the overwhelming majority of the population suffering miserable living conditions. Unemployment and underemployment affect large segments of the population, both urban and rural, while the minimum wage does not cover the basic necessities of workers and their families. Against this, members of the civilian and military oligarchy identified with the dictatorship accumulating income and wealth by legal as well as illegal means and consuming luxury goods. This is made possible by an economic policy benefiting the privileged few to the detriment of everyone else,

while feeding inflation and sinking the country deeper and deeper in debt.

The economic situation has made social conflicts more acute, both between landless peasants and landowners and between wage earners and employers. Attempts by peasant and worker movements to organise themselves in unions have been systematically repressed. Nevertheless, social struggle has intensified and the number of new peasant organisations and trade unions outside the control of the pro-government party is increasing.

In the light of this situation prevailing in Paraguay, the Socialist International agrees:

(a) to condemn Stroessner's regime;

(b) to demand, in the name of democratic solidarity and of international law, that the state of siege be lifted and the fundamental freedoms enunciated in Paraguay's constitution be restored, along with respect for human rights, freedom of organisation and action for political movements, peasant movements and trade unions, freedom of the press (including the reopening of closed-down media) and freedom of return for the exiles; in other words, to demand that the conditions be created for the transition to the rule of law and democracy, paving the way for the unrestricted exercise of people's right to vote in legitimate elections.

(c) to recommend that SI member parties take appropriate steps for the isolation of the Paraguayan dictatorship;

(d) to reiterate its support for a peaceful transition to democracy, without either violence or terrorism.

The Council also reiterates its support for and solidarity with the Revolutionary Febrerista Party (PRF), the SI's member party, with the other parties in National Accord, and with all other democratic social forces in their struggle to put an end to dictatorship and ensure a democratic future for their country.

Resolution on Chile

The Socialist International notes that the serious crisis which Chile is currently undergoing as a consequence of the continued rule of the dictatorship is continuing.

The Council expresses its anxiety about the worsening of the situation due to the persistent and systematic violations of human rights; the economic crisis which has thrown the majority of the population into poverty; the increase in unemployment among vast sectors of the population; and the lack of an integral solution to the problems of exile despite the repeated publication of lists of people whose return is authorised, which has not however managed to put a stop to the exile of hundreds of well known Chileans.

This situation has deteriorated

over the last two months with the dismissal and expulsion of more than eight thousand teachers from the public sector. According to allegations which have not been denied, this followed demands by the security forces, which justified this arbitrary measure on the grounds of the teachers' political differences with the regime. This is a serious violation of fundamental rights.

The Council notes that the great majority of the people of Chile has reasserted, especially following the recent visit of Pope John Paul, that it wants a political and non-violent transition to a return to democracy, achieved through dialogue.

To this end, important national personalities have called for the peaceful mobilisation of the people, mainly with reference to the campaign for free elections, which implies nothing more than the legitimate right of democratic peoples to decide their own destiny. The political parties have responded to this appeal. However, the political laws imposed by the regime do not provide democratic guarantees. What is required is a plebiscite on the reform of the 1980 constitution.

Resolution on El Salvador

The Socialist International repeats its request for the resumption of the national dialogue between the El Salvador government and the Revolutionary Democratic Front / Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FDR/FMLN), which can lead to a solution that will succeed in putting an end to the war, as called for by the majority of the people of the country and by the Contadora Group and its Support Group, and provided for under the proposals put forward by President Oscar Arias of Costa Rica.

Furthermore, the Council asks the El Salvador government to stop the serious violations of human rights, and condemns the lack of political freedom which hinders the free functioning of progressive political organisations, including our member party, the National Revolutionary Movement (MNR), to which it reiterates its support and its solidarity.

Resolution on Guatemala

The democratisation process in Guatemala constitutes a fundamental element for peace in Central America. The Socialist International therefore condemns the destabilising actions which are taking place. We express our support and solidarity for the democratic and progressive forces, particularly for the Democratic Socialist Party of Guatemala (PSD), our member party, in their efforts to consolidate the process towards full democracy.