

Solidarity With Polish Workers

A detailed discussion of the disturbances in Poland last December was one of the main features in the proceedings of the Bureau of the Socialist International, which met in London on January 19. A number of points of view were advanced by Bureau members. It was agreed that the events in Poland were a further example of bureaucratic communist suppression and further evidence of the failure of the communist system. The Bureau expressed its solidarity with the Polish workers who had demonstrated their legitimate grievances, and noted the admission by the new First Secretary of the Polish Communist Party that past policies had failed.

Before beginning its formal business, the Bureau stood in tribute to the memory of the late Nath Pai, of the Indian Socialist Party (see p. 38). It then formally accepted a proposal from Tom McNally (Britain) that the Socialist International should organise a series of expert conferences to study important aspects of party work such as organisation, finance, membership and publicity. It was envisaged that such groups could also study important internal policy questions, such as workers' control and the role of the multi-national company.

European issues were prominent on

Bureau Participants

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the 'political' agenda of the Bureau meeting. In addition to the debate on Poland already mentioned, the Bureau had discussion on the split in the Luxembourg Socialist Labour Party and the question of European security.

As regards the recent scission in the Luxembourg Socialist Labour Party (LSAP), the General Secretary reported that the new LSAP Chairman (Antoine Wehenkel), General Secretary (Raymond Vouel) and Second Secretary (Roger Linster) had visited the London Secretariat of the International in the previous week, and informed him of the current situation (see January issue for details). The Bureau expressed its regret that the split had taken place, and instructed the Chairman and General Secretary to meet representatives of both sides and report back to the next Bureau meeting.

On the matter of European security, British and Finnish representatives gave verbal reports on bilateral contacts between the two parties the week before, in which the question of European security had figured prominently. The Bureau made further decisions regarding the working of the International's study group on European security, whose report will be presented to the Council Conference in Helsinki.

After the luncheon interval the Bureau was addressed by a special guest — George Thomson, British Labour Shadow Defence Minister—on the subject of European security and defence. (An article based on his remarks appears on pp. 32-33.) Bruno Pittermann summed up the discussion which followed by restating the International's support for the holding of a European security conference.

The Bureau's consideration of non-European matters covered the Middle East, Latin America, Pakistan, North Vietnam and Iran.

After looking at the present situation in the Middle East, the Bureau decided that this subject would be included in the business of the May Council Conference of the Socialist International. It was also agreed that the International should set up a study group on the Middle East, to examine the present situation from a socialist standpoint, as well as the problems that would follow any peace settlement.

The second proposal came from Luciano De Pascalis of the Italian Socialist Party, who had recently led a delegation of his party to the United Arab Republic (see *SII*, November

1970). The thinking of the Bureau on this matter was summed up by Gwyn Morgan (Britain). Recalling an earlier decision that the International should seek contacts with Arab socialists and countries, he said that because of the changing situation in the Middle East an 'on-going study' was needed on which the appropriate bodies of the International could base their decisions.

As regards Latin America the General Secretary reported on his visit to Chile to attend the inauguration of President Allende. He also informed the Bureau that the Radical Party of Chile had decided to apply for full membership of the Socialist International.

Turning to Asian matters the Bureau heard a report from K. B. Andersen (Denmark) on a recent Scandinavian socialist mission to North Vietnam. The delegation, comprising representatives of the Danish, Norwegian, Finnish and Swedish member parties of the International, visited Hanoi and met several political leaders. They had formed the opinion, said Andersen, that the Communists of North Vietnam had no wish to copy the Russian or Chinese models. They also believed that the North Vietnamese were capable of fighting a much longer term war if necessary. The Danish representative added that the Nordic social democratic parties had invited the North Vietnamese to send a delegation to Scandinavia.

The Bureau then heard a report from Hans-Eberhard Dingels (Germany) on a recent visit of a delegation of the German Social Democratic Party to Iran. Finally, the Bureau welcomed the Secretariat's initiative in establishing contacts with the All-Pakistan Awami League led by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

The next Bureau meeting of the International will be held in Zurich in March, on the invitation of the Swiss Social Democratic Party.