

Appendix 3

Opening remarks by SI president Willy Brandt

Mr. President, dear friend, comrades and guests,

We are sincerely grateful for your kind words of welcome, Mr. President. What you have told us about the situation of this large and beautiful continent, unfortunately still experiencing many hardships, will be very important for our discussions in the coming days.

Our international community, the Socialist International, was very pleased to accept the invitation extended by you, Mr. President, and by your party. The organising of a Council meeting in your country gives us a welcome opportunity to show to the whole world our feeling for Africa, for its different problems, as well as for its common hopes.

This is my fourth visit to Dakar, Senegal, and this country has impressed me profoundly. Like other participants, I have a particularly pleasant memory of the month of May 1978 when our Bureau - as the Council of the Socialist International was then called - was privileged to meet here and to discuss as its main theme North-South Relations.

We wish to express to you, Mr. President, and to your friends, our very sincere thanks. From here we greet the people of the whole African continent. Our special wishes go to your country, Mr. President, to Senegal, and to the Senegalese.

The current meeting in Dakar is primarily devoted to African problems. However, in the light of events that have occurred in the past few months, it goes without saying that we shall also express our views on questions related to the maintenance of peace. Since I do not want to anticipate any specific comments that the Socialist International might make on this point, whether in terms of reaffirming previous positions or taking new ones, I will limit myself to the following remarks.

If the two superpowers reach a first agreement on eliminating all intermediate-range nuclear missiles, then this is in line with what we have been demanding for a long time. Even if - for the time being - such an agreement would cover only one category of nuclear arms, this would be an achievement of fundamental importance. So, we have no qualms about supporting such a development and encouraging the parties concerned to take further steps along the same lines.

The next item on the agenda now is a reduction of both "strategic" and "tactical" nuclear arms, i.e. both long-range and short-range weapons. Furthermore, we must press for a worldwide ban on chemical weapons, and we need arrangements for Central Europe - and elsewhere - based on the principle of common security.

A reduction of tensions in the relationship between the two superpowers will not automatically have a beneficial effect on dangerous regional conflicts, but it may very well do so. We certainly all agree that every new opportunity arising for demilitarising conflicts should be utilised. Most of the warnings expressed by the Socialist International have turned out to have been justified; hence, any suggestions made by the SI nowadays carry more weight. Of course, we are aware of the responsibility that this entails.

After the Special Conference of the United Nations in New York, which did not yield much progress - and which one of the superpowers did not attend - I would like to draw our attention once again to the "neglected interdependence" between overarmament and underdevelopment. If military expenditure is reduced, part of the surplus funds which become available as a result must be channelled into development aid. This is an area where we will still have to do a lot of talking to persuade the parties concerned.

Development is another word for peace. Working towards a reasonable and, where possible, fair order in international economic relations will continue to be one of the main tasks for the Socialist International.

We are meeting on a continent which has had more than its fair share of severe crises. I'm thinking of the debt burden and of the acute and recurrent famine crisis. I'm also thinking of the aggravating ecological problems and of the rapid growth of a population suffering from lack of jobs, housing and food, and often also from lack of water.

The fact that malnutrition has increased in the past few years in ten African countries must come as a shock. As far as the debt issue is concerned, another shock seems to be imminent for this continent: although the corresponding figures for Latin America are much higher, many African countries - particularly in the sub-Saharan region - are in a virtually desperate financial position, when measured by economic indicators. The political consequences of this situation cannot as yet be foreseen.

Those who had promised to help a couple of weeks ago at the Annual Conference of the IMF and the World Bank in Washington should be reminded

of their promise. Without a reduction of debts on the one hand, and a limitation of debt service on the other, there is no way out of this situation.

What we demand is constructive development aid policy - a policy that pursues the struggle against hunger and misery by concrete measures, a policy that is orientated towards the satisfaction of basic human needs, and a policy that is adapted to the local conditions prevailing in the various countries. Such a policy must be specifically geared towards countries whose own resources do not suffice. This suggests that it should be focussed in particular on LDCs, i.e. countries with a shortage of raw materials.

I can assure our partners in Africa that we in the Socialist International will do whatever we can to make sure that they will enjoy solidarity and assistance from other nations. Those of us who come from industrialised nations have recognised that what is at stake here is both a moral challenge and, in the long run, the defence of common interests.

Here, in the past few days, there have been reports and discussions about democracy in Africa. We shall hear more about this in the course of our meeting. One point that I would like to stress in my opening remarks is that we have learnt in the Socialist International not to impose rules, let alone models, on each other. We also realised very early on that democracy is not only political in nature, but that it also has a cultural and a socio-economic dimension of considerable amplitude.

A sort of "European pseudomorphosis" i.e. the transfer of forms without maintaining the same contents, has sometimes led us astray. The principle of pluralism and steps in the direction of more real democracy will certainly continue to be of crucial importance to us. But if we define our understanding of democracy in global terms, we will have to properly appreciate the traditions and living conditions prevailing in different parts of the world.

This will also be an important point to be considered during our work on the Socialist International's new declaration of principles - a task which we have set ourselves for the next Congress.

In this context, we will be able to use some of the ideas expressed in the so-called "mandate of Lima", a text which we adopted last year. In this text, we said "Political democracy is a critically important but not a sufficient condition for the socialist transformation we seek." Furthermore, we found that "there is no one model for socialism, but there are basic values and fundamental conceptions of political, economic and social

rights, which are common to all the parties in the International. We are a profoundly pluralist movement which does not identify with any philosophical interpretation of socialism. And we believe that socialist theories must be adapted to a changing world society so that each people and each generation can set their own stamp on the reality of their time and place."

I wanted to remind you of this and ask you to maintain this orientation during our programme of discussions.

Speaking at the meeting of the Socialist International - "struggles for human rights" - here on African soil, I reaffirm that we democratic socialists are on the side of those who want to see to it that the legacy of colonialism and racism is completely overcome.

In particular, this means that we are on the side of the people of South Africa who still suffer tremendously from persecution and injustice. Unfortunately, there are countless cases of severe violations of basic human rights. We cannot be indifferent to any of these cases, and we must not be distracted from the fact that there cannot be any compromise with apartheid. It must be removed because it cannot be reformed. We demand freedom of organisation and unconditional freedom for all political prisoners. We demand that every reasonable and feasible pressure be exerted so that even the hard-hearted recognise the mood of the times.

The Socialist International also opposes the illegal occupation of Namibia and the policy of destabilisation pursued vis-à-vis the Front Line States, who have our support and solidarity. Our special greetings go to the ANC and SWAPO.

For us in the Socialist International, Africa is not a newly-discovered continent. As far as Europe is concerned, early opposition against colonial rule played an important role in the workers' movement, even if this opposition was certainly not always adequate.

Part of the 'fresh start' that the 1976 Geneva Congress meant for our International was, among other things, our determination to leave earlier eurocentrist tendencies behind. Since that time, our community has gained substance - particularly in Latin America. There has been a considerable increase in the number of member parties and of movements leaning towards us in this region.

At this Geneva Congress, Leopold Senghor - one of our honorary presidents today - led the Socialist Party of Senegal into the Socialist International and he invited the Bureau, as it was called at the time, to hold a meeting in

Dakar two years later. As early as 1977, I had asked our unforgettable comrade Olof Palme to travel to Africa in order to establish contact with the independence movement leaders known to us and to express our interest in a regular exchange of views. In this context, I cannot fail to mention the efforts made by our Senegalese friends in the framework of the "Interafricaine Socialiste". To us, this organisation became a partner for discussion among friends.

The variety of contacts helped to establish a practice permitting interested African parties to make their voices heard in our organisation without having to apply for formal membership. This is in line with my understanding of the Socialist International: it is not only an organisation - as important as this may be from the point of view of the secretariat and, even more so, from the perspective of the Finance Committee - but it is also a political offer to have more than just a polite dialogue. Above all, the International stands for a great idea that unites us: that of democratic socialism.

In the past few years, there have been two initiatives that were designed to strengthen cooperation with political forces on this continent. First of all, the SI Study Group on Africa, SISGA, which was established only recently under the joint chairmanship of Senegal and Austria. This group was also in charge of preparing the topics for the conference held here before our Council meeting.

Secondly, we formed an SI Southern Africa Committee, SISAC, chaired by Joop den Uyl. In 1984, this Committee met in Arusha at the invitation of our good friend Julius Nyerere. Top representatives, both from governments of this region and from liberation movements, were present at the meeting. In April 1986, I myself was able to visit the Republic of South Africa and to preside over an SI Special Conference held in Gaborone, Botswana. This conference was attended by Quett Masire, the President of Botswana, and by Kenneth Kaunda, the acting chairman of the OAU. In March of this year, representatives of the Socialist International met in Lusaka, at the invitation of the president of Zambia, in order to discuss once again what the Socialist International and leaders of the Front Line States and liberation movements can jointly do in order to put an end to the racist illegitimate regime.

I have mainly talked about Black Africa now. I am sure that our friends and comrades from the northern part of this continent will not misunderstand this. For obvious reasons, some of us did not have to travel far to get there. I am expressing not only my own feelings but also those of many others when I say that we would be happy if our contacts could be stimulated and strengthened for the benefit of all.

One of the reasons why such a large number of parties all across Africa are friends of the Socialist International is that our member parties have developed good bilateral relations with a variety of African parties. This certainly also applies to my own party, the SPD. All in all, we can say that we know more about each other now, and that there is room for strengthening our cooperation even further.

Living up to the expectations associated with us in Africa will continue to be difficult. But it is important if we want to carry the torch jointly to where it belongs: to the point where freedom and justice and solidarity become reality for the whole of Africa.

These are the remarks, dear friends, that I wanted to make at the beginning of this meeting.

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Council circular no. C2/88
February 23, 1988

To Council members

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF THE
SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL

Dakar, Senegal - October 15-16, 1987