

Exposé by Marceau Pivert on the idea of a Socialist Europe (1947)

Caption: At the Second International Conference for the United Socialist States of Europe, held in Montrouge, Paris, on 21 and 22 June 1947, Marceau Pivert, member of the executive committee of the French Section of the Workers' International (SFIO), sets out the basic premises of the International Committee for Study and Action for the United Socialist States of Europe, which he chairs.

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The movement in favour of the United Socialist States of Europe was born in the middle of the Second World War and was launched by the only organisation which had the possibility then of freely expressing itself, the British Independent Labour Party. Through its Parliamentary Group, under the inspiring leadership of James Maxton, through its press, its platform and its literature, this far-seeing Socialist vanguard was able to analyse the needs of a society moving inevitably towards its end and the aspirations of all those workers who remained faithful to working-class internationalism.

In February 1947, at London, the idea of the Socialist solution to the international problems, as far as Europe is concerned, had already gone far beyond the narrow circle of revolutionary Socialists which had maintained their contacts, more or less intact, through the terrible difficulties of the Nazi and Fascist counter-revolutions and the World War. Trade Unionists, co-operators, pacifists, intellectuals, anti-Fascist resisters, victims of the Hitler concentration camps, representatives of the colonial peoples and Socialists of different tendencies joined the pioneers of the idea of a United Socialist Europe.

In June 1947, at Paris and Montrouge, the circle of the protagonists of the Socialist Federation of United European States and the Socialist planning of its key industries, was further considerably increased. We give in the following pages a resumé of this second Conference and the text of the resolutions which were adopted. We also give a general idea of the various activities contemplated and the spirit which animates them.

1. The politically conscious workers of all tendencies, particularly Trade Unionist and Socialist, and who have, for the first time since the end of the First World War, entered into a fraternal compact in pursuit of a common task of socialist propaganda, are not prepared to accept the partition of Europe and the world into two hostile blocs, the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R.
2. Neither are they prepared to admit the inevitability of a Third World War which will bring chaos and ruin to the whole of human civilisation.
3. They do not accept the idea of any system of power politics or diplomatic combinations, of any balance of military power, of zones of influence or strategical points. On the contrary they base their thought and action on the interests of all workers, of all civilised men and women who, whether they like it or not, have the common ideal of finding a constructive solution which they can jointly offer as an alternative to the false solution based on armed violence and war.
4. All believe that, above and beyond the positions taken up by Governments, by military headquarters or by the bureaucracies, without any democratic consultation of the masses, there exist nevertheless the elements of a universal public conscience which, if it could be mobilised, would compel our so-called leaders to modify the course of events which are conducting us to the greatest of all catastrophes.

These common beliefs define the limits but also the vast field of action of the International Committee for Study and Action for the United Socialist States of Europe.

We propose to propagate the idea of a Socialist Europe, to study the possibilities and conditions necessary for its realization, to combat the misrepresentations, conscious or unconscious, which would tend to cloud the issues and seek to place us in the same position as the partisans of one or the other of the two blocs. We make an appeal for solidarity on the part of the American workers and we shall try to reach an understanding with the workers of the Eastern European countries and even with the Russian workers themselves, so unhappily isolated from the rest of the world.

We would underline the urgent necessity for all European workers to become conscious of their own possibilities and their own destiny if they desire to escape from the terrible dangers of one form of colonization or another.

And as to the rest, we have confidence in men of goodwill, of the active trade unionists and Socialists themselves who should lead their organizations in this united effort. If they do not succeed, not only will Europe be finally dismembered and enslaved, but Socialism itself will only remain as the memory of a generous dream, rejected and consigned to the oblivion where sleep the dead gods of yesterday.

It will have simply allowed to pass, in the march of human events, its historic hour. Europe will have missed its destiny.