

## Exposé by Jacques Robin on the result of the Second International Conference for the United Socialist States of Europe (August 1947)

**Caption:** In August 1947, Dr Jacques Robin, Member of the International Executive Committee of the Socialist Movement for the United States of Europe (MSEUE), assesses the Second International Conference for the United Socialist States of Europe, held in Montrouge, Paris, on 21 and 22 June 1947.

**Source:** Unite or Perish - Report of International Conference Paris (June 21&22, 1947), Report of the Second International Conference for the United Socialist States of Europe, Paris, 21 and 22 June. London-Paris: International Committee of Study and Action for the United Socialist States of Europe, 1947. 143 p.

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### CONCLUSION

By Jacques Robin

A lapse of two months allows us to judge more clearly the lines traced during our Conference at Montrouge at the end of June. Let us briefly examine the result. During this period of preliminary efforts and confusion we must carefully note all the lessons of each experience as we cannot indulge in the luxury of repeating our attempts.

*What were the Aims of the Conference?*

In the first place, speaking broadly, they were to give a new stimulus to International Socialism and to measure in the year 1947 its real possibilities and its perspectives.

The general line which we take as our guide is the following: — Socialism has arrived at a crucial crossroad where, from having been a general movement of opposition to a decaying system, it must now show proof of its constructive force.

One basic idea united us. In the present situation the first battle ground of International Socialism is Europe. The analysis of the situation, which had given birth to the London Conference, was even more clearly in evidence at Montrouge: — "A Socialist Europe or the Third World War."

*First of all let me give a brief technical résumé of the Conference itself.* Fourteen countries delegated authorised representatives of all shades of Socialist thought, revolutionaries, reformists, trade unionists, co-operators, federalists, pacifists, anarcho-syndicalists, etc. This diversity is, in our eyes, a symbol representing the most important, because constructive, aspect of Socialist thought.

The second fundamental characteristic of the atmosphere of our Conference was the absence of sectarianism and the loyal participation of all in the discussion.

*On the debit side* we note that the organisation of the Conference was defective from many points of view: an insufficient contact with socialist centres of many European countries, and the absence of certain comrades whose experience would have been of great value. In future we must make a much greater effort so that our organisation will be more efficient and adapted to surmount difficulties by modern technical methods.

It is also necessary to mention that the phraseology used in numerous contributions was often vague and there was difficulty in formulating concrete and constructive proposals.

Finally, we encountered the general difficulty of linking ourselves organically with other existing movements, which should be considered as a check. We did not hope to be able to do this. Indeed, we should have deceived ourselves if we had thought this difficulty would not have arisen.

*In the development of any force there comes a more or less lengthy period of inconclusive attempts, of work which appears to show no immediate result, before arriving at the possibility of effective action.*

*But as against this negative result, the positive side of our Conference is very striking.* We can say, roughly, that this Conference has allowed International Socialism, for the first time for many years, to be the first to have interpreted the fundamental events of our epoch, the first to have brought solutions to its problems. In a word, to have passed from the defensive to the offensive.

### (1) What did we say at Montrouge?

That in the actual relation of forces, the general grouping around the two great blocs, the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. is inevitable. The hope of the nations of Europe to maintain benevolent neutrality is vain. The attempt to remain in the balance is illusory. The retreat to a "national" position is impossible.

And, two months afterwards, all the events which have taken place have shown that the policies followed by the European countries have compelled them to choose between being satellites of one or the other of the blocs. One after the other European countries have shed the illusion that they can escape from this terrible choice and, in addition to this, their own internal economic and social difficulties have shown them the futility of attempting to find solutions on the national plane.

## **(2) What did we say at Montrouge?**

There was only one way of avoiding a Third World War: a Socialist European Federation. Apart from this, any European effort in this direction would only be a disguised attempt to annexe a part or parts of Europe to one or the other of the two blocs.

And, one month after, the word "Europe," which we used and which, only a short time ago, caused us to be considered as Utopians, is taken up with a moving or cynical enthusiasm by the different national governments and the totality of the European governing classes.

And, also one month after, the total failure in Paris of the meeting of Bevin, Bidault and Molotov, comes to show the impossibility of laying the basis of a new Europe without Socialism. The meagre results of the Conference of the Sixteen is a clear demonstration of the attempt to seize upon the word "Europe" on behalf of one of the two blocs. Like the Marshall Plan, the Molotov Plan is simply one of the baits used by the two giants.

## **(3) What did we say at Montrouge?**

That the German problem was the European touchstone. Only a Socialist, Federated Germany can be the herald of a new era. If not, the separation of Germany into two zones grouped around one of the two blocs will be carried out, and the division of Germany will be the symbol of the division of Europe.

And, one month later, we have the fusion of the British and American zones, and the pressure on the French zone. On the other side, the Soviet zone of Germany is integrated into the "protective market" of the U.S.S.R.

The London Conference to be held in November, 1947 to examine the German problem seems to be extremely compromised.

## **(4) What did we say at Montrouge?**

The position in Greece had developed into a hotbed of virulent war. The two blocs are, indeed, already in armed conflict. There is no possible solution for Greece apart from her integration into a Socialist and democratic Europe.

And, one month after, American technicians and money are being used to equip the National Army, and Russian technicians and money are being used to support the partisans. The United Nations admits its impotence to control these displays of force.

## **(5) What did we say at Montrouge?**

That the position in Spain would continue to be the spectre at the feast of the victory against Fascism. The hidden but definite interests of the two great blocs in maintaining Franco in power prevent the fall of his régime. There is no hope for Spain apart from the Socialist European solution.

And, one month after, Franco could, with impunity, enter into his parody of a referendum, and the two blocs did not go beyond making platonic recommendations to the Spanish Republicans who have been duped during the last ten years.

### **(6) What did we say at Montrouge?**

That only a short time would elapse before the social and economic conflict would be followed by war against the Indonesian Republic, a symbol of the independence of colonial people.

And, one month after our resolution had been voted, war is raging. The Americans propose their "good offices" and U.N.O. exposes its powerlessness.

No solution appears in this domain apart from an association on a vast scale between the emancipated colonial peoples and a Socialist Federated Europe.

Thus, on all these points, International Socialism, in the course of our Conference, has shown the correctness of its analysis and the necessity for the solutions indicated if we are to avoid the terrible conflict which becomes ever more imminent. We can say, therefore, that the real and positive advance made by our Conference will, in effect, efface all that may appear difficult and incomplete in our movement.

We must now increase our action. What are our immediate plans?

(a) As a general rule of action we must be prepared to seize all the opportunities (and there will be many during the coming months) to link up all movements, all centres, all shades of Socialists and Federalists who are bound from the force of coming events to detach themselves from one or the other of the two blocs, and who will be compelled to join with us in our advocacy of a Socialist Federated Europe.

(b) One of the weapons which appears to us to be the most fruitful would be the formation, decided upon at Montrouge, of an Economic Committee in our movement. This Committee would draft an appeal to all sympathetic technicians and economists, setting forth the concrete problems; coal, food, electricity, housing, displaced persons, in order to deal with them on the only sure basis: viz., the planification of Socialist Europe.

In this field, we must, as quickly as possible, bring forward the necessary proofs that Socialism will be able to direct European economy, and to propose the formulae which will ensure the raising of the standard of life of all European peoples.

(c) Finally, we must make full preparations for our next Conference to be held in Italy, at which, for the first time, will be submitted the totality of the problem of the real emancipation of all the colonial peoples, and which will seek, with their representatives, the concrete means of achieving this emancipation.

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Such are the vital points in our next stage. Let us continue to define and link up all our common action. This appears to be our short-term programme.

From out of the deep crisis, unavoidable in our society, will arise at a given moment the situation which will more than ever demand genuine revolutionary action. More than ever International Socialism must have, in preparation for this action, the aim of training its workers, of developing its vision, and of becoming the fundamental dynamic force for the people of all lands.

**LONG LIVE INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM!  
LONG LIVE THE UNITED SOCIALIST STATES OF EUROPE!**