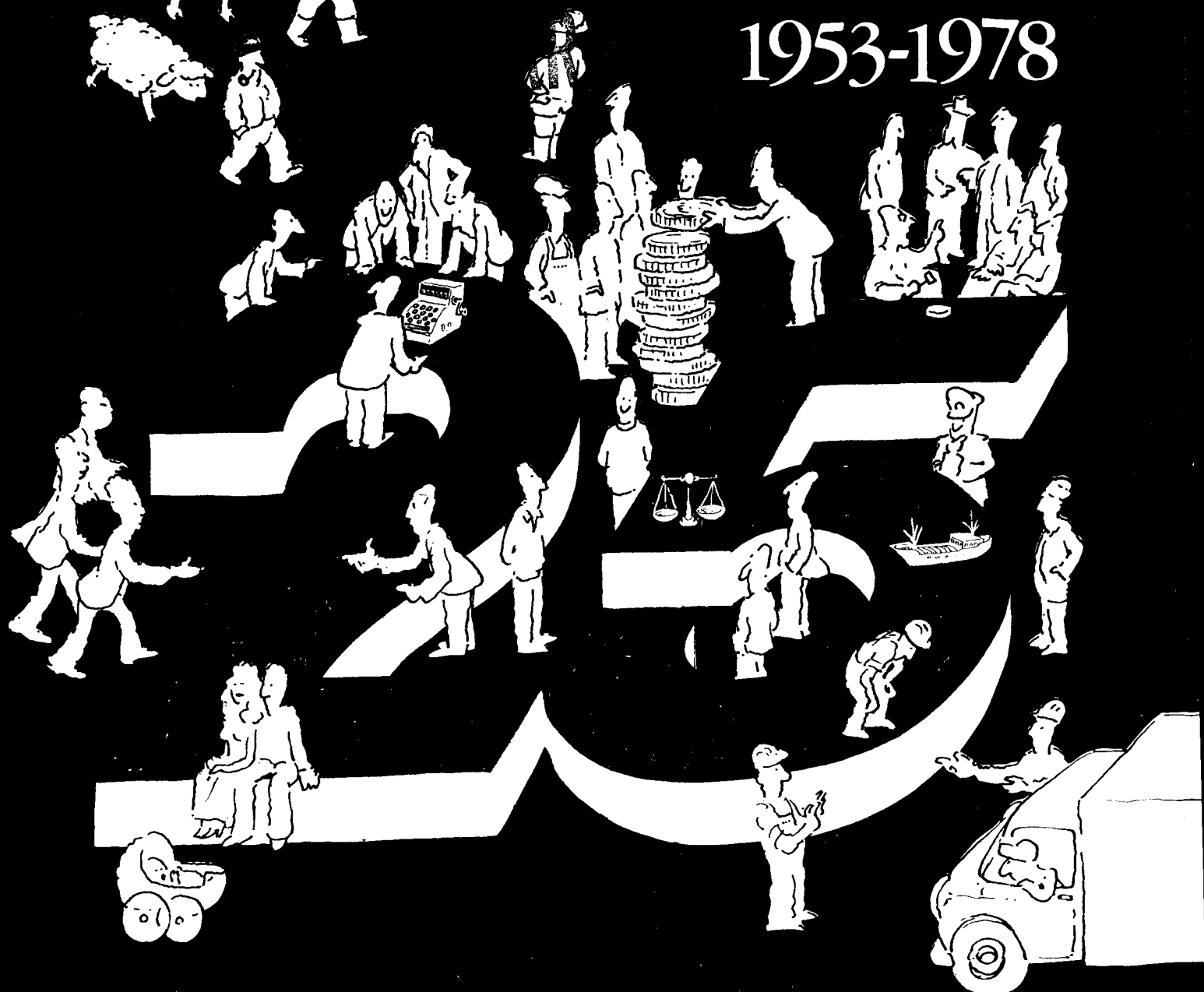


A black and white illustration of a group of people in a line. In the foreground, a person is shown from the side, looking back over their shoulder. Behind them, several other people are standing in a line, some looking forward and others looking back. The style is simple and graphic, with bold outlines and no facial features.



Editorial

Ludwig Fellermaier

On 23 June 1978, the Socialist Group will have been in existence for 25 years. Will it be a conventional anniversary? A cause for celebration, for self-congratulation and satisfaction with its achievements? There was nothing sensational in its inception 25 years ago, when Socialist parliamentarians from the then 6 Member States of the Coal and Steel Community began cooperating at European level, for the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe had after all existed since 1949. Nevertheless, the formation of the Socialist Group did represent something of a departure. Its members sat, not in national delegations as in the Council of Europe, but in mixed-nationality groups according to their political persuasions. In 1953, the 23 members of the Socialist Group elected Guy Mollet as their first chairman, with Erich Ollenhauer as vice-chairman. Only 8 years after the end of the Second World War the participation of German parliamentarians was quite an achievement. Once again, the formation of one group demonstrated that European Socialists were ready for and capable of international solidarity and cooperation.

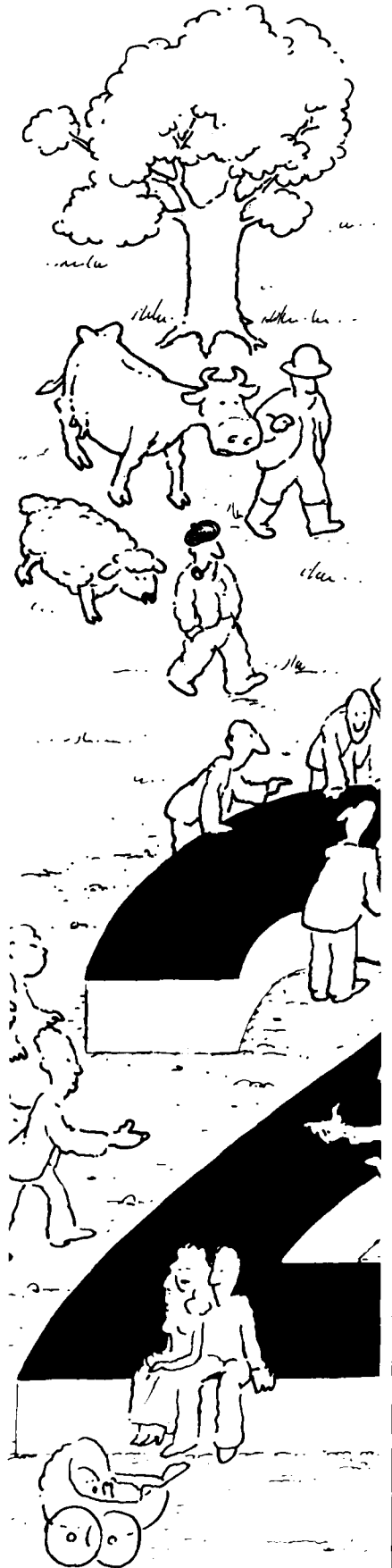
These 25 years of working together within the Socialist Group have encompassed a period of drastic change in Europe. The history of our group is the history of European integration, with its successes and its failures. However, all the internal and external crises and problems have served to strengthen one conviction that only a democratically united Europe will be able to cope with the many tasks which lie ahead. This has been the objective towards which the members of the Socialist Group, despite differences of opinion, frequently leading to fierce exchanges, have together worked.

The belief in common basic values has always proved stronger than any current differences. Since the enlargement of the Community to include the United Kingdom, Ireland and Denmark, the Socialist Group has become not only the numerically largest political group in the European Parliament, but is also the only group with members from all nine Member States of the Community.

The common political foundations for our work are the objectives of democratic Socialism, i.e. the preservation and strengthening of freedom, justice, and solidarity in Europe. Our efforts are therefore directed at participation in the shaping of the policy of European unification in the interests of the working man.

Solidarity at European level is necessary if we are to achieve greater freedom and justice by democratic means. This presupposes that all concerned are prepared to pool their interests and share each other's burdens on a permanent basis. Only then can we establish a definite policy in favour of the socially weaker sections of the population and the less privileged regions. However, Western European integration does not mean isolating ourselves from non-EEC countries. We cherish special links with the forces of freedom and democracy in Portugal, Spain, Greece and Turkey, and support their efforts to move closer to a united, democratic Europe.

The European Community must be aware of its responsibilities as a stabilising influence in Europe, in the relationship between East and West and increasingly so in the relationship between the rich industrial countries and the developing countries. Policies based on this awareness and incorporating appropriate measures can always count on the support of the Socialist Group.





The 25th anniversary of the establishment of our group falls one year before the first direct elections to the European Parliament. We welcome this long-overdue event. Elections will be a first move, albeit an important one, towards counter-balancing the present lack of democracy in the European Community, towards shedding more light on the decision-making processes and towards a permanent strengthening of popular participation in policy formation. The second and no less important stage will then be the further expansion of the parliamentary powers of the European Parliament. The efforts to achieve this objective, which follows logically from the direct elections to the European Parliament, will be the real trial of strength for the first directly-elected Members of the European Parliament.

The Socialist Group has always actively favoured keeping membership of the European Community open to European countries with democratic forms of government. We therefore welcome the applications for membership from Greece, Spain and Portugal. Our sister parties in these countries can be sure of our support.

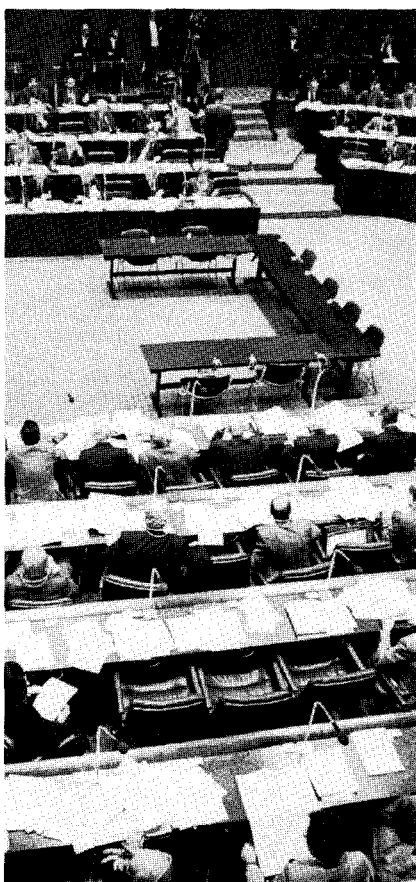
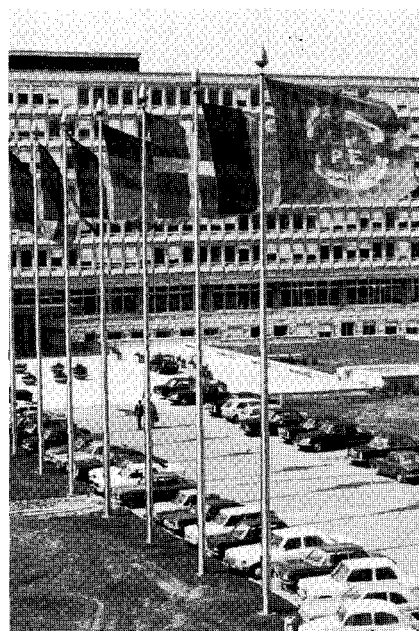
All these prospects justify the claim that the Socialist Group is at a turning-point in its development. While in purely numerical terms, direct elections will double the membership of the group, the difference in terms of quality will be even more clear-cut. Most of the directly-elected European Members will concentrate exclusively on their European mandates. This will not merely change the style of debate and work in the Assembly and in the political groups, but will also compel and enable Members, far more than they have in the past, to account to the electorate for their political activities. The objective of a popular – that is a comprehensible – policy for Europe must be given prominence here. Political controversy will sharpen, and we can be sure that the old-world courtesy of present-day exchanges in Parliament will frequently be supplanted by a somewhat more direct style. Even in European politics, one is sometimes forced to speak one's mind. In the process, the differences between the Conservatives, spread as they are among several political groups, on the one hand, and us Socialists on the other will emerge more clearly in parliamentary debate. This will also help to make the various political standpoints clearer to the European electorate.

Moreover, enlargement of the Community by three new Member States will entail considerable practical difficulties for the European Parliament. We need only think of the problem of translation with nine official languages.

Our group and the other political forces in the European Parliament have reached an interesting point in their development. A multitude of tasks lie ahead. As in the past, they can only be handled in open debate on the basis of opinions hammered out within the group.

In accordance with our basic conviction that further integration without simultaneous democratization of the European Community is unacceptable to democratic Socialists, we shall continue to work towards joint solutions worked out in a spirit of solidarity and mutual understanding.

The thanks of us all go to those who, as Members or staff, have made possible the past 25 years of successful work by the Socialist Group. Our hopes for the future rest on the continuation of this work, in the service of the people and of peace in Europe.



Mitterrand, guest of the Socialist Group

François Mitterrand was the guest of honour at the Socialist Group's anniversary lunch. Also present: K.B. Andersen, C. Cheysson, A. Giolitti, F.O. Gundelach and G. Jaquet. Mr Mitterrand delivered the following speech:

'I have always been a faithful supporter of the European ideal, but my attitude is tempered with caution. I have amply demonstrated my support, but I am still cautious. I think that to remain a convinced supporter one must keep the cause constantly under review (...)

Next year will be marked by an event of major importance: the election of the European Parliament by direct universal suffrage. This will not present any legal or doctrinal problems for the French, since we consider that the debate has long been irrelevant, insofar as there is already a European Parliament, of which you are all distinguished members. The only difference that the new system will make is that when the electorate have cast their votes it will be the representatives of the people that will meet in Brussels, Strasbourg or Luxembourg, and not just delegates of national parliaments, officials and the more influential members of society. We already have a Parliament, but a new Parliament is to be born. This is a matter that is to be considered in the near future since in ten days or so I shall be visiting Brussels with a French Socialist Party delegation to discuss the possibility of drawing up a political declaration or a joint election manifesto for the Socialist and Social-Democratic parties of the Community. I say 'possibility' simply because nothing has yet been decided. Of course this does not mean that we do not earnestly hope for a successful outcome. We are now going to concentrate on the drafting of texts. Will there also be public discussion and debate, outside the parliamentary group which will create friendly links within a framework of lively competition inspired by the interests of our countries and perhaps also by theoretical and ideological differences. We have often said in France that although we French Socialists, myself in particular, had — and still have — strong reservations about the Commu-

nity as it is at present, we were nevertheless in favour of preserving its institutions, although we felt that they could be improved. Chateaubriand said paradoxically, that the function was derived from the organ. An institution had to be created before the integration process could begin. The European institutions are an excellent starting point. With the stimulus of direct elections, I hope that we shall be able to build the Community we want, with each Member State integrating into the whole but at the same time preserving its traditions and its separate identity. This will be a tremendously difficult but also a very worthwhile enterprise. Many of you have been far more involved in the Community, than I have myself. How many European Socialists and Social Democrats amongst us — it is essential to distinguish between them, for historical reasons; in France, they do not imply any hierarchy but simply reflect a different historical development — will shortly find themselves in the same Assembly? When I say 'us', I do not know what this implies, since I do not know what will happen in other countries, but since what is involved is a democratic discussion and the choice of men and women by the militants of our parties, who can say in advance what will be their choice? I think that as far as our own Socialist Party is concerned we shall send to Strasbourg and elsewhere European Members of Parliament who are truly representative of the people and of the sectors of society with economic power, who fully endorse and subscribe to the rules of an institution from which a strong movement will have to be developed. The pursuit of politics is always a delicate matter. My country's interests will not always necessarily coincide with those of its neighbours or the Community as a whole. What would a Dane or an Englishman say in my place? No doubt he would have even more to say. But I must give a firm undertaking from the French Socialist Party that like those who have gone before, Gérard Jaquet and Mario Zagari, the initiators of this important period in our history, we shall be sincere and committed Europeans. But what form will our contribution take and what will be our policy? It is an exciting prospect to think that after June 1979

we shall be discussing these matters in a Socialist Group which could have twice as many members as the present group. Italy and France are the two countries which are still suffering the most from the effects of the split of 1912-1920 and subsequent years. We shall see what we are capable of, and we hope to be able to make a major contribution, as a country which, as far as the Socialists are concerned, has always been internationalist in its attitudes. We are committed internationalists and patriots. It is difficult to be both at the same time but we shall show by our actions that it is possible.

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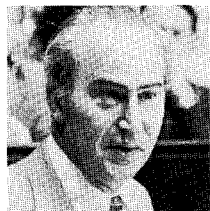
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Socialist Group: 25 years on

On the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the Socialist Group, EUSO has asked a number of prominent Socialists, past or present members of the European Parliament, to look back on the past and comment on their experiences in the European Parliament, and to bear witness to a model of cooperation between Socialists within a European institution at the turning-point in its history.

Tribute to the Socialist Group of the European Parliament



Henk Vredeling
(EP 1958 – 1973)
Vice-President
of the European
Commission

My first thought on being asked to contribute to the publication commemorating the 25th anniversary of the Socialist Group was 'How time flies!' My earliest memory of the European Parliament's Socialist Group goes back to the time when the Socialist Group of the Common Assembly of the ECSC was preparing in 1957 for the transition to the European Parliament which was to cover, in addition to the coal and steel sector, the vast field of activity of Euratom and the European Economic Community. I also remember the Group's first meeting in this new forum under the direction of our Belgian comrade Mr Fayat. And I still have a vivid memory of the European Parliament's committee meetings in a conference room of the Belgian Senate ...

The Socialist Group is now 25 years old. This event is being celebrated on the eve of European elections. There could scarcely be a better moment for the Group to celebrate this jubilee. Many of the Socialist Group's members have from the outset fought for direct elections, which are of crucial interest to the Social Democrats since they alone can ensure the democratic character of our cooperation in Europe.

The Socialist Group has always played a prominent part in the struggle for democracy, and this is not to be

wondered at. Its members have always come from the Social Democratic movement in their own countries, where the history of social democracy has been dominated by the eternal struggle to secure, develop and defend parliamentary democracy as a system offering the surest guarantees for greater democracy in economic, social and cultural relations in our societies.

In this context the Socialists see the fight for greater powers for the European Parliament and the holding of direct elections as no more than the pursuit of a consistent policy line. One of the principal achievements here has been the increase in the European Parliament's budgetary powers, culminating in its right to reject the budget in its entirety.

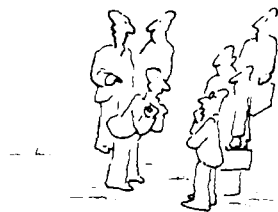
Despite the fact that its members come from diverse national backgrounds, the Socialist Group has always adopted an approach which has left a distinctive mark on the European Parliament's activities.

First and foremost, it has always been present when the need has arisen to defend the rights of the underdog: the Group has never been prepared to grant priority in the European Community to the free play of capitalist forces. It has often stood four-square against conservatism in ensuring respect for the principles embodied in the EEC Treaty. It has always led the political field in defending the interests of the Third World and, more generally, in ensuring the spiritual release of mankind from the stifling tradition of the exercise of authority by those in power who claim to have human interests at heart.

When we look back over the past twenty-five years our thoughts naturally turn also to the future and we wonder what history has in store for

us. Will the same factors still come into play? In a sense they surely will, although the emphasis is likely to change. The direct elections in 1979 are a central factor here. They will determine the numerical strength of the Socialist Group but, still more important, they will be a pointer to the common policy to be pursued by the Group in years to come. I am firmly convinced that concrete problems will play a greater role than in the past. The redistribution of income will move into the centre of the political stage, because in this period of economic stagnation a more equitable distribution of incomes is far more important than an increase in their absolute level. Secondly, the Socialist Group will be involved in the vast enterprise of pursuing a policy of full employment. It is no longer enough to look back in yearning at the days of the fleshpots of economic growth when full employment was an automatic corollary of growth. We must instead address our minds to the consequences of Western economic growth for our own environment and in terms of the exhaustion of natural resources. We shall need to give far greater attention to the worldwide division of labour. Our investment policy cannot be based to the same extent as in the past on private initiative not because private initiative is undesirable in itself but because it cannot be equal to the great challenges of our age.

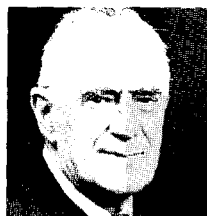
In a world where an overwhelming majority of countries do not know democracy and where naked power dominates, we must maintain and extend our democratic societies. In our democratic system we must give priority to human well-being, and aspects such as urban development, regional planning, public health and environmental management are bound to be central.



Finally, the Socialist Group must inevitably give thought within the European Parliament to the great issues of world peace and security. The still unresolved problem of European defence remains one of the difficult policy areas for democratic socialists.

The history of European unification is fairly recent. Despite understandable hesitations and isolated pockets of resistance, the democratic socialists have always stood in the forefront of the struggle for further unification – inevitably so, given the history of their international movement. Together with its natural allies in the European trade union movement, the Socialist Group in the European Parliament, as the exponent of democratic socialism in Europe, still has a massive task ahead of it.

From scepticism to cooperation



Michael Stewart
(EP 1975 – 1976)
Former Minister

In July 1975 British Labour MP's first entered the European Assembly – or was it the European Parliament? To the British the choice of word was significant: to them a Parliament is a sovereign body, unchecked by a written constitution and capable of dismissing Governments, and their first reaction to an Assembly which is only a consultative body with limited powers is likely to be one of frustration. We had to learn to stop making comparisons between Westminster and Strasbourg (or Luxembourg); to realise that they are different bodies, with different functions; and to accept that because an Assembly is not sovereign it is not therefore useless. We did in fact learn these lessons quite quickly; we discovered how the statement and formulation of policy in Assembly

committees could in time influence Ministerial action; we realised the significance of those debates in the full Assembly which dealt with major issues of foreign policy; and we began to make effective use of Question Time.

In all this we were greatly helped by our comrades in the Socialist Group, as we came to appreciate the skill with which they had learned to use the procedures of the Assembly. Our arrival certainly created problems for the Group. It was well known that the British as a whole were critical of several aspects of Community policy, and that some members of the British delegation disliked British membership of the Community. We were, moreover, the largest national section in the Socialist Group and we had – not, I think, unjustifiably, – a fairly high opinion of our own abilities, since we had been carefully chosen so that the delegation as a whole would possess expertise in a good many fields – law, politics, agriculture, the sea, regional development, social questions, and the Budget. There was certainly the material here for strain and resentment. Were we going to commit the error of supposing that we were conferring a favour on the Group by joining it? Were our comrades going to regard us as a potential source of added strength or as a vexatious burden to be borne?

There were, indeed, some difficult occasions, but several factors combined to achieve unity. First, there was the goodwill and patience of our comrades, who were generous over chairmanships of committees and appointments to special delegations and willing to be flexible over group discipline – a word which the British always disliked, preferring 'co-operation'. Second, there was the work itself; we all found that when we got down to formulating detailed policy – e.g. on agriculture and the law of the sea – it was possible to resolve what had at first seemed irreconcilable differences; and if the British were

sometimes tiresome, they were always diligent. Third, there was the admirable work of the staff. Further, we became increasingly aware of our identity and unity as Socialists both through conflicts with our opponents in the Assembly, and through contact with Socialists outside the Community. I think that we and our German comrades both learnt something from each other about how to be as offensive as possible (within the rules of order) to German Christian Democrats and British Tories. By contrast, at the Group meeting of Perpignan, we shared the moving experience of learning from our Spanish comrades of the problems they face now that liberty has dawned in their country.

It is my earnest hope that the unity which was forged between the British and their comrades will persist in the new and very different circumstances of the directly elected Assembly.



A milestone on the road to Europe



J. Wohlfart
(EP 1964 – 1974)
Minister of the
Interior of the
Grand-Duchy
of Luxembourg
Former Vice-President
of the European
Parliament

The Socialist Group's 25th anniversary! This for me, as for many others, is an important date for both political and personal reasons. Having had the privilege of working for over 10 years in the Socialist Group of the European Parliament, I have been able to observe how important the decisions and standpoints adopted there could be and how the contacts established there between the elected representatives of different nationalities could develop into close ties of friendship.

On 23 June 1953, for the first time in the history of Europe and probably of the world the elected representatives of six democratic nations pooled some of their powers of decision and thus prepared to embark upon a common future.

Of course, the road is long and we have covered only a very small part of it. The small part we have trodden together and on which the Socialists of our countries have endeavoured to promote the cause of democracy and social progress in our countries and in Europe has been paved with almost as much failure and tribulation as success and elation.

During the 10 years before I joined the Group and the following 10 years when I had the pleasure of working in it, we have been able to project a clearer picture of what we, as Socialists, mean by Europe: not just a Europe of goods and capital but a Europe of human beings and of economic and social justice. During that period we have also succeeded in steadily increasing the democratic control exercised over the Community's activities; the European Parliament's budgetary powers have increased, which means that it can direct these activities into channels more

favourable to the Community's citizens.

We are now entering upon a new stage with direct elections to the Parliament; these will give the people's representatives a direct mandate and enable them to bring their full political and human weight to bear on the shaping of Europe. I have not been involved in the last stages of the debate on the electoral system to be adopted for direct elections, but I have followed closely all its convolutions and reverberations; I have fought side by side with my comrades in the Socialist Group for the advent of this new era.

Yet what reluctance, what obstacles, what nationalism we have had to overcome! In other fields – social policy, citizens' rights, the adoption of more closely aligned policies in the interests of our countries – progress over the past twenty-five years has not always been in line with the Socialists' wishes. It has been our constant hope that our states would abandon what one is bound at all times to call their 'egoism'. We have wanted to see restrictions and controls imposed on the facilities still granted to international capital; and we have wanted greater protection and scope for action for the workers.

Europe, the life of the European Parliament, these mean, too, the impact of our Community on the peoples of the Third World and on the world as a whole. These peoples see in the construction of Europe a model of peaceful development which they admire and from which they know they can expect assistance untainted by imperialism. For this reason our Parliament is undoubtedly to a greater extent than many others a permanent forum for those in position of responsibility in the five continents. The European Members of Parliament are constantly in touch with the peoples for whom Europe has a special responsibility. I myself have served on the EEC-Turkey Joint Parliamentary Committee and in the Parliamentary Conference of the Yaoundé Convention, and I can truly say that, if there is one field in which Europe can claim some success and where it has no cause for shame, it is this.

Throughout this long period I have also had the good fortune to become acquainted in the European Parliament and, in particular, in the Socialist Group, with a number of eminent politicians, Ministers and Members who, starting as my comrades, duly became my friends. Unfortunately, some of them have left us, sometimes tragically, but their names stand as landmarks along our road. Since I cannot mention them all, I should like at least to recall to memory my friend, Francis Vals, who was chairman of the Socialist Group for much of the time that I was a member and after whom, as a mark of gratitude, the European Parliament recently named its finest conference room.

However, let me not conclude on this sad note. While it is only natural that the oldest of us should think in terms of our departed comrades and the youngest of the progress already made, it is to the future that we must now turn our attention. Our aim must be to make Europe a model, both for our own peoples and for the rest of the world. The approaching direct elections are an important step in the direction of parliamentary democracy and control by the people over the decisions affecting them. Those who come after us must continue along the same path and give to Europe what it still lacks at present, so that its institutions and policies may serve not only a limited number of special interests, but the nations of Europe as a whole, the one united European nation.

Common Market – No; a Social Europe, Yes!

Justin Keating
(EP 1973)
Senator
Former Minister

The Irish Labour Party campaigned against full membership of the Community in the referendum which took place in May 1972.

Ours was not a chauvinist or obscurantist campaign (though inevitably we had some 'allies' who took that position) but was based on economic arguments. We believed that an Association Agreement giving us industrial free trade but permitting us to protect our weaker industries during a prolonged transition period was more appropriate to our level of development. We raised doubts about the seriousness of the Community Commitment in regional and social policy, and about the future of the CAP. But the people voted by more than four to one to go in.

Our party did not have the traumas of the British and Danish part because from that moment we said 'We are democrats. We have had an overwhelming popular decision. We accept it. We will take our place, wholeheartedly, in the Community institutions and we will strive there to the limit of our ability, to avert the dangers we fear and have warned against, and to strengthen the good and positive things. We will work in fact to give the Community 'a human face', believing as we do that this must be done, and can only be done by the Socialists'.

It was in that mood that Conor Cruise O'Brien and myself arrived in Strasbourg in January 1973. We found two things immediately. One was an overwhelming warm and helpful welcome in the Socialist Group. The other was that we were able to make common cause immediately with the Socialists of the Six who has a long experience of working together. This latter was in sharp contrast to the hesitations and doubts of some of the representatives of the Socialists of the 2 other new members.

We were happy, coming from a country where Social Democracy is relatively weak to be part of major political grouping in the Parliament.

But coming from the periphery of the Community we found (and it is still

true) that Strasbourg and Luxembourg were difficult to reach, and that the constant moving between 3 centres exacerbated our travel difficulties.

When we were just getting to know our way around the corridors, we found ourselves in Government so that our start in the Parliament only lasted until the late spring of 1973. Cruise O'Brien went of the Department of Posts and Telegraphs, and I to the Department of Industry and Commerce. The 'oil shock' was half a year in the future.

With my responsibility for international trade I attended the Foreign Ministers Council, where a few months later I was the first Irishman to chair a Council of Ministers, and where during Garrett Fitzgerald's extremely successful Presidency I sat in the Irish seat.

A year ago we lost power. Conor went on to win a Senate seat, resign the Labour whip there, and become Editor of the London 'Observer'. I won a Senate seat too, and have become Dean of the Veterinary Faculty in University College Dublin.

Our time in the Parliament was too brief, but we recall it with pleasure and excitement (especially the friends we made). But the dangers against which we warned and the weakness which we struggled against still remain. Perhaps more so.

The first European Assembly



Gérard Jaquet
(EP 1952 - 1956)
Former Minister
Vice-President
of the European
Socialist Movement

My memories of the first Community Assembly date back many years - the Strasbourg Assembly had not yet become the 'European Parliament', it was still the 'Common Assembly' of the European Coal and Steel Community, which I attended regularly from the time of its inception until 1958.

Those were the pioneering days of European integration and we were determined to build a lasting and effective Community. The Second World War had just ended and we keenly desired to effect a reconciliation between the peoples of Europe, who had been locked in such savage conflict for more than five years. We thought that by working together and establishing a common authority we could overcome our differences and resentments.

We believed, moreover, that in the modern post-war world only large-scale economic and political groupings would be able to ensure long-term growth and better living conditions for their citizens.

Also, at a time when international difficulties were on the increase, we felt that if the countries of Europe joined together they would be in a better position to safeguard their independence and consolidate the peace.

This was the attitude of the first European Members of Parliament. This was how they approached the daunting problems of building the first Community. But despite the highly technical nature of the parliamentary



debates at that time, there was undeniably a determination to overcome the difficulties and iron out differences of opinion.

Since these first tentative steps Europe has undoubtedly progressed. Two new Communities have been set up alongside the ECSC, and yet we are still far from satisfied. The Community has run into a series of crises. Nationalist attitudes, which we sought to destroy, have re-emerged, and at certain particularly difficult periods it seemed as if the enterprise was going to founder almost as soon as it had begun.

Despite the initial enthusiasm the European Assembly did not work entirely to our satisfaction. It is true that it had certain powers; but in many areas it was merely a consultative body. The debates were often of an academic nature. There were no real clashes of views, and the tendency was to gloss over differences of opinion rather than discuss them frankly.

This is still the case with the European Parliament, but the situation is likely to change. In a year a new Parliament will be elected by universal suffrage. The election campaign which is now in the course of preparation will lead to widespread confrontation. The question put to the peoples of the Community – 'What kind of Community do we want?' – will be of crucial importance. Clearly the Conservatives and Socialists have very different views on this matter. The question will have to be answered unequivocally and the confrontation will naturally take place in the new Assembly.

The European Parliament will then be a real Parliament. It will have to make choices and assume its responsibilities. It is with this in mind that the European Socialist parties are preparing to face the electorate and they will enter the campaign with confidence.

Memories of a veteran



Pierre Vermeulen
(EP 1952 – 1954;
1965 – 1966;
1972 – 1974)
Former Minister

I am one of the survivors of the original Socialist Group of the ECSC Common Assembly, later the European Parliament.

Two dominant memories of that period remain: the strength of the ideological currents which led to the formation of the political groups, and the spirit of independence of the newly-elected members.

When the Assembly was constituted, the general view was that the need to start building Europe would make our old-fashioned political ideas obsolete and prevent an excessively partisan approach on the part of its members.

Seats were therefore allocated in alphabetical order. I sat next to a Dutch anti-revolutionary called Vixebixse.

However, three groups had already spontaneously formed themselves on the eve of the constituent meeting: the Socialists, joined by the Italian Republicans, the Catholics, strengthened by the Dutch and German Protestants, and the Liberals. There was no further talk of national groups, for whom office space had been provided (in breach, incidentally, of the European spirit), but merely of ideological groupings.

It would be false to believe that our spiritual identities are the product of historical accident. It was only natural that the European federation would be based on the political beliefs which are to be found, unvarying, in all our countries.

From the outset, the formation of the political groups made European federation inevitable.

Our western civilization is dominated by three major movements opposed, but also linked, to one another.

For the Christians, every individual possesses a spiritual worth which is at

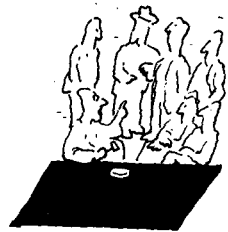
once equal and irreplaceable. The individual responsibility which springs from this spiritual equality does not, however, imply total freedom in the social sphere. Human weakness requires the organization of men into more or less rigid hierarchies determined by intellectual progress and their strength of moral character.

For the Liberals, individual liberty extends not only to the intellectual sphere but also to economic relations. The fullest possible exercise of liberty is the driving force of civilization.

The aim of the Socialists, finally, is to reduce to the greatest possible extent social and even natural inequalities with a view to enabling each individual to freely realize his own potential. Help for the weakest members creates the solidarity on which society should rest.

During the debate on the Assembly's first budget, a Socialist rapporteur drew the Assembly's attention to the importance of allocating funds to the political groups to enable them to finance their activities. With the agreement of the representatives of the other groups, he pursued this idea, supported by Guy Mollet, at the Assembly's meeting of 11 March 1953. At this early stage the Socialists were already showing their commitment to what constitutes the cornerstone of a parliament's strength: the creation of ideological groupings which are the condition for the expression of political opinion and the emergence of clear-cut policies. Again, in January 1954 it was Guy Mollet who was the first to speak on behalf of a political group. So in this respect the Socialists gave a clear lead.

In November 1954 opposition between the groups became apparent when Mr Teitgen called on the Assembly to take an unambiguous stand on policy. The choice, he said, was between liberalism or planning, competition or specialization, economic considerations or human considerations. His call was not followed but, whenever economic and social objectives were discussed, the Liberals were in opposition to the Socialists, leaving the Christian Social Group, whose centrist line split the Assembly into two unpredictable groups, divided.



My second notable memory is my experience as rapporteur for the Rules Committee. My proposal to include in the Rules of Procedure a provision to allow ministers to take part in committee meetings was vigorously rejected because, it was claimed, it would have weakened the Parliament by reducing its independence. The Germans were particularly firm on this point.

This narrow view of a parliament at a clear remove from the executive is not easy to grasp when one considers that Parliament cannot force ministers to resign and has always avoided motions of censure so as to enable the Commission to fully exercise its role as intermediary between the governments and the Parliament.

Here, however, I might point out that in Belgium, two ministers only started to take part in parliamentary committee meetings in 1945. It did in fact occur before that, but only rarely, and on each such occasion the minister, after making his apologies, gave pressing reasons for his presence. After the war, the variety, urgency and technicality of the problems facing the country led to a total reversal of the situation so that now the committees protest if a minister is not present, refusing to meet in his absence.

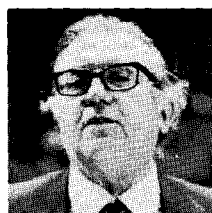
Before concluding, I should like to recall that in October 1958 the Socialists took the major step of forming a liaison bureau between the six parties represented in the European Parliament, with the addition of delegates from the Consultative Assembly and delegates from the Socialist International in cases where delegates from other parties had been invited to attend conferences. This was the case when, immediately following the May 1960 debate at the European Parliament on direct elections, a meeting of the liaison bureau was called on 7 and 8 May. A number of delegates from parties other than the six from the European Parliament took part in this fourth conference. On 8 May 1960 the enlarged liaison bureau declared that it considered direct elections to the European Parliament to be an essential democratic requirement. It urged Socialist Group members of the Assembly to press for rapid elections.

It called on the Socialist Group to submit, without delay, a proposal for increased powers for the Assembly as an essential counterpart to the Community's increased powers, democratic control over which had to be maintained. It called for steps to be taken to ensure effective control of the financing of the electoral campaign, for the adoption of measures to guarantee the application of uniform rules regarding the electorate, eligibility, impartiality of the voting system, etc; lastly, the conference emphatically recommended the drafting and adoption by the six parties of a European socialist programme in time for the elections.

We all know the prominent role that our comrade Fernad Dehousse played in the preparation of what now, almost twenty years later, is about to become reality.

May the forthcoming elections live up to our hopes.

The ad hoc Assembly: Prospects for Europe



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(EP 1952 - 1954,
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European Parliament
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When on 9 March 1953 the results of exactly six months' work by the 'ad hoc' Assembly, which had been entrusted with the task of plotting the future course of a politically united Europe, it was already clear to all Socialists that the road to success would be difficult and tortuous. But we also saw that the right course was one which would enable Europe to grow outwards from a stable base.

This was the start of an obstacle race, the end of which we have not yet reached.

The main difficulty we had to contend with was the dying kick of nationalism.

As far as the Socialists were concerned, therefore, it was not only

natural but even essential to find common ground between their own positions and thus overcome the clear contradictions that arose from the clash between different national situations. Raymond Rifflet wrote at that time in the revue 'Sinistra Europea' which I was then publishing in Rome: 'Each one of us saw Europe as an extension of his own problems ... We Socialists have no illusions about the 'natural harmony' of interests and we know that it is sometimes necessary to break down individual, albeit legitimate, barriers in order to arrive at a situation of healthy and vigorous coordination'.

On the basis of this 'reasoned pessimism', we Socialists concentrated at that time on the need to create a political climate favourable to the creation of a united Europe.

We realized that the intractable enemies of integration and supranational union were not the only enemies with whom we had to cope. Even more difficult to counter were those whose vision of Europe was coloured by external factors. I refer to those who saw the cold war as lasting indefinitely and who saw in the EDC nothing more than a counter-thrust against the threat of invasion by Soviet forces.

This was a particularly dangerous idea, firstly because it assigned a military aspect to the whole idea of European commitment, and secondly because it contained within itself the seeds of the destruction of the Community since, once the psychological pressure of the 'invasion complex' had disappeared, the only valid reason for supranational endeavours would have ceased.

We Socialists took a different point of departure. We realized immediately that if it was felt that a defensive body was really needed, it could only be provided by the achievement of genuine political integration, and that the one depended on the other.

But it seemed even more obvious to us that Europe's entire future depended on an unwearying political initiative aimed on the one hand at constructing solid democratic institutions within the Community and on the other hand

at shaping a clearly defined role for the Community vis-à-vis the outside world.

Thus we sowed the seeds of what was to become the policy of détente, which was to have its greatest impact between the end of the 60s and the beginning of the present decade, thanks to the work of certain personalities with a profound European vision – chief amongst them the President of the Socialist Internationale, Willy Brandt – as well as to the dedication of other Europeans, amongst whom I will be forgiven for mentioning the name of one Italian, namely Pietro Nenni, who will be remembered for his accomplishments while Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister.

It was against this background that we set to work with patience, but also with energy. We knew that we had to work within the limits of a compromise that had yet to be realized, even though the 'ad hoc' Assembly had delineated it very clearly.

I recall Monnet's words in that Assembly: 'European union cannot be founded on goodwill alone. Some rules are necessary. The tragic events we have experienced and those that we witness at the present time may have made us somewhat wiser. Men have to pass on, while their places are taken by others. Our experience will die with us and that we cannot leave them, but what we can leave them is sound institutions. The life of institutions is longer than that of men and women and, if they are built on solid foundations, institutions can accumulate and pass on the wisdom of successive generations'.

The institutions are not shapeless forms like rubber shoes that fit all sizes. They are the pillars that must be erected to bear the weight of the political thrust to generate our campaign. We have never believed, however, that a well ordered society, whether national or supranational, will spring up spontaneously. Spontaneity breeds only disorder.

It seems to me worthwhile recalling that, notwithstanding the differences

of opinion on certain points that obtained at that time unlike today, it was the Socialists who were the first by a long way to form their own European union which was more than a mere grouping at parliamentary level.

We realized at once (and set out straightaway to do something about it) that the central problem with which Europe was faced was a twofold one: that of healing the discords between the various nations, and the even more knotty problem of overcoming the geographical division between the two parts of the German nation. These were two facets of one and the same problem, which could only be solved in one way, namely by following the path of détente, cooperation and the building up of a Europe that would have its own role on the world stage.

And while it may be true that this building is still far from completion, it is equally true that we Socialists have laid the most solid foundations. It is for us, therefore, to take on the burden of bringing it to a successful conclusion at some future date.

The Socialist Group now

When the Common Assembly of the European Coal and Steel Community took up its work in 1952, it was clear to the Socialists of Europe that nothing of any political importance could be achieved in national delegations such as existed in the Council of Europe. For this reason they were among the most ardent advocates of the creation of political groups. The Socialist Group was founded on 23 June 1953, Guy Mollet was the first chairman.

During the years that the Common Assembly of the European Coal and Steel Community met, it was noticeable that once initial difficulties had been overcome, the Socialist Group very rapidly formed a closely-knit unit and was able to agree on and put forward common views on all important questions relating to the European Coal and Steel Community.

With its 66 members the Socialist Group holds one third of the seats and is the largest political group in the European Parliament. Members from nine countries and eleven different parties have come together to form the Socialist Group in the European Parliament.

The Group's geographical composition is as follows:

United Kingdom:	18 members
Federal Republic of Germany:	15 members
France:	10 members
Netherlands:	6 members
Italy:	5 members
Belgium:	5 members
Denmark:	4 members
Luxembourg:	2 members
Ireland:	1 member

Since March 1975, Ludwig Fellermaier (Federal Republic of Germany) has been Chairman of the Group. The Vice-chairmen are Pierre Lagorce (France), Ernest Glinne (Belgium), John Prescott (United Kingdom), Pietro Lezzi (Italy) and Piet Dankert (Netherlands). Frankie L. Hansen (Luxembourg) is the Group's Treasurer.

The activities of the Group are prepared by the Bureau and in various working parties. The Group regularly meets before and during each part-session of the European Parliament. The Group also holds twice-yearly study meetings at which subjects of special interest are discussed.

