



## Action not words for women

What is the Community proposing to do about women? At the first session of the European Parliament in this United Nations' "year of the woman", both Commission and Council of Ministers received a fierce battering from three members of the Communist Group: Tullia Caretoni Romagnoli (It), Marie-Therese Goutmann (F) and Leonilde Iotta (It), and to prolonged applause from the public galleries.

First the Council: what, they asked was it doing about the proposed directive on equal pay approved by the Parliament in April last year? How far had "preparatory work" got on removing discrimination in job openings? What was the Council's view of women anyway?

From the other side of the chamber, Lady Elles (Con/UK) added her support. "I hope the President-in-Office of the Council will see that women take part in shaping the future of the Community...".

As it happened, the man in the firing line for the Council was the Irish Minister of Agriculture, Mark Clinton, substituting at the last moment for President of the Council Garret Fitzgerald. The Council, he replied, had approved the directive on equal pay in December; further than that, however, it hadn't done anything, because it hadn't yet received any proposals; and that was the job of the Commission. So the buck passed rapidly to Mr.

Clinton's compatriot, Commissioner Hillery.

A directive would be ready "soon", he announced, on equal opportunity, promotion, vocational training and conditions of work. At the same time "the Commission is putting the final touches to a 'programme for women'. I think the Commission intends to take a very full part in International Women's Year."

But this did not satisfy Mrs. Caretoni Romagnoli who declared herself "profoundly disillusioned" at hearing a "bureaucratic answer" to "a dramatic question". Mrs. Goutmann wanted something much more fundamental — action against the "society of exploitation" which was really more to blame than were men, "We expect something better from the EEC," she said, "not just words but above all action, concrete action." Nor did she find very much to agree with in the previous speech of Hector Rivierez (EPD/F) who believed that "French women were already spoilt."

## DIRECT ELECTIONS: THE PEOPLE'S SHARE

European elections in 1978 came yet another step closer on Tuesday January 14 when a packed sitting of the Parliament in Luxembourg passed the new election convention by an overwhelming majority. The proposals have now gone to the Council of Ministers, who are under instructions from the December "summit" to act next year.



Hans-August Lucker (CD/Ger), Tom Normanton (Con/UK) and Lord Bessborough (Con/UK) congratulate Schelto Patijn (Soc/NL) on the adoption by the Parliament of his direct elections report.

Parliament spent the whole of Tuesday's debates on direct elections. Two major reports were before the House: that from the Political Committee presented by the Dutch Socialist Schelto Patijn; and a commentary, with significant amendments to the Patijn report, from the Legal Committee presented by German Socialist Hans Lautenschlager.

Almost every speaker from every point in the political spectrum supported the principle of direct elections. The case of the most committed Europeans was summed up in an impassioned peroration from the President of the Commission, Francois-Xavier Ortoli; Democracy was Europe's "most precious gift, and perhaps also its most distin-

guishing feature". It was right that the first steps towards the new Europe should be in this direction. Peter Kirk (UK), for the European Conservatives, later pointed out that when the British people came to vote in their referendum, they would know "that they will have a share in the Community on which they are voting".

### Power must be legitimate

But direct elections also found favour with less committed Europeans. On the right, Sir Derek Walker-Smith (Con/UK) carefully emphasised that "the case for direct elections neither need nor

should be put forward as a means to achieve and expedite full political federation"; and French Gaullist Christian de la Malene (EPD), though pointing out that elections on their own were not enough, declared that "in a world where authority is being questioned, power, to be real, must be felt to be legitimate".

On the left, likewise, direct elections were not felt to be enough on their own; but as Francescopaolo D'Angelosante (It) put it for the Communists, they were "important to transform the Community into a structure responsive to the legitimate social, economic and political interests of the workers...".

### Room for supermen

The most extensive conflict was on the future size of the Parliament. Patijn proposed 550; Lautenschlager 335. It was essentially a conflict, as Independent Member Lucien Outers (Bel) noted, between ensuring adequate representation for smaller countries and the principle of "one man one vote one value". "Although it has a bigger population than Denmark," noted John Brewis (Con/UK), "we in Scotland can expect at the most 8 members, compared to 17 for Denmark under present (i.e. Lautenschlager) proposals. I think, Sir, once we depart from constituencies of about the same size, we are putting a premium on independence...". But in the end Parliament voted for the smaller number at the cost of a greater disparity in electorate sizes. As Patijn himself pointed out, there might one day be new member states and "if we start too large we shall never get it down again".

The closest vote was on whether membership of the European Parliament should continue to be compatible with membership of a national parliament. Patijn proposes that the "dual mandate" should be neither prohibited nor made compulsory. "If somewhere in Europe there are supermen who feel that they can carry both burdens at once, why should we prevent them?" asked Peter Kirk. But others, like James Hill (Con/UK), did not believe in supermen; ordinary mortals could work properly in one parliament only. The Lautenschlager amendment called for complete incompatibility of mandates.

It was Lord Gladwyn (Lib/UK), who spotted a rather crucial point. Could European Parliamentarians be co-opted Members of their national parliaments? Perhaps he was thinking of the "Stewart Plan" for co-option to the Commons; but perhaps, again, it had crossed his mind that Life Peers were precisely co-opted MPs! At all events, all the UK Peers at Luxembourg voted against the amendment, which was defeated by a mere two or three votes.

### How shall we vote?

What, then, is the position as it affects the United Kingdom? Subject to the approval of the Council of Ministers, it is probably as follows.

1. British voters will go to the polls on Monday May 8, 1978, together with those in the rest of the Community, to elect a European Parliament.
2. The number of UK seats will be 67 out of 355.
3. We shall be able to use our own system of voting: single-member constituencies with simple majority; or including an element of Proportional Representation.
4. Members of the Commons and Lords will be able to stand if they wish.

Direct elections, as Russell Johnston pointed out during the debate, will change the Parliament fundamentally. "It will probably become a much more divided, a much more argumentative and perhaps a much less pleasant place. But," he added, "without them the necessity of a democratic Europe can never be achieved."

real point of the debate on Britain's continued membership of the European Community, President of the Parliament Cornelis Berkhouwer told the Manchester Chamber of Commerce on January 8, was: if Britain were to leave, what alternatives would be open?

Would the United States rush to the rescue? "The answer is clearly no." Would the Commonwealth rally round? Again no: "the Commonwealth countries have obtained or are in the process of obtaining profitable new trading arrangements... These countries are better off in their new position... EFTA was a stepping stone into the Common Market, not an alternative. The NAFTA idea was dead, and access to some world pool of cheap food" was a myth.

Some anti-Marketters clung to the idea that there could be some favourable commercial agreement with the Community. But Britain leaving "would create such great bitterness that the remaining member countries would have little motive to give Britain a favourable and cosy industrial trading status." And even if such an arrangement could be made, Britain "would be completely excluded from the decision-making process of the Community, of which it would become merely an inert appendage."

## UK not guilty this time

"The famous doctor Paracelsus," new Commissioner Guido Brunner told the Parliament in his maiden speech on Monday, January 13, "although born in Switzerland, was able to study in Ferrara and practise in most European countries until his death in Salzburg — and that was in the 16th century." Today, he went on, we hadn't even got that far in the mutual recognition of diplomas and freedom of establishment! However, the Commission had been working on the problem and in the case of doctors the goal was in sight: eight member countries were agreed that the free movement of doctors benefited both doctors and the public. Which was the ninth country? Not, as it turned out, the United Kingdom, but Belgium. Commissioner Brunner appealed to the Parliament to help in convincing the Brussels government, and pointed out that experience of free movement for doctors would be valuable when it came to the turn of other professions like architects, lawyers, engineers and midwives.

## Can you tell the difference?

European education left much to be desired according to many speakers in a debate following an Oral Question by Jan Broeks (Soc/NL) on January 13. For Karl-Heinz Walkhoff (Soc/Ger) the situation was typified by graduates of a European school who could not distinguish between the European Community and the Council of Europe. Michele Cifarelli (Soc/It) saw a lack of awareness of common civilisation in Europe and insufficient realism in the teaching of history. Just as the British traced their civil liberty to the Magna Carta and Italians the constitution of the Italian Republic so everyone in the Community should be aware of the Community treaties and the progress of the past 30 years.

Commissioner Brunner (who succeeded Ralf Dahrendorf) spoke of areas of education where progress was most necessary. Migration in the Community was now on a greater scale than ever and the children of migrants needed special attention and supplementary courses in order to retain culture from their mother country.

## When is a worker...?

Not true, an angry Libero della Briotta (Soc/It) said on Friday, January 17, that the Commission had voted down the principle of giving migrant workers a vote in the regional and local elections of their host countries? No, replied Commissioner Borschette, it was not; the otherwise reputable news agency that had published the story had got it wrong. Commissioner Hillery's programme for reinforcing migrant workers' rights still stood, and was not just empty words. For Lady Elles, however,

the problem was not that simple. What was the programme? Who qualified as a "migrant" — or as a "worker" for that matter? Was there any legal basis for migrants' votes? Could they stand for election themselves? And what if they became a majority in some locality, voted in their own local council, and then all went home? There must be some test of allegiance, and a much better move would be to simplify the procedure for acquiring a new nationality.

## Open House

Anyone who sees the Community as faceless bureaucrats holding secret meetings in Brussels should have been in the Parliament during the January part-session and seen a real 'open house'. On Tuesday President Cornelis Berkhouwer dismissed Members' objections as television crews swarmed round the chamber with the words "what we are debating is of great importance: it should be given the widest publicity". The switching on of a few extra lights for a photographer evoked the muttered response from one of the galleries: "couldn't happen in Westminster"!

## No deals with South Africa

Asked by members of the Socialist Group to confirm that "the Community refuses to grant South Africa any trade concessions, condemned as these must be, in the form of a special agreement and that it is against the policy of apartheid", both the President-in-Office of the Council, Mark Clinton and Commissioner Sir Christopher Soames confirmed the Community's opposition to apartheid, and reiterated that there were no plans for any trade agreement.

## Private enterprise and Europe



"Liberalism is not so much a political philosophy. It is more a political way of life." So the leader of the European Parliament's Liberal and Allies Group, French Independent Republican Jean Durieux, begins his recently published statement of the Liberal case.

Be that as it may, Jean Durieux lacks nothing in philosophical precision. His text is as coherent a statement of classical Liberalism as Professors Hayek or even Friedmann could wish.

"Liberals believe in private enterprise and free competition, in the right of ownership and the right to strike. We believe in the market economy because this is the only way of ensuring the measure of decentralisation need to give the individual any real power of decision in the economy. Liberals see economic growth as the surest way of looking after those in greatest need."

"It is indeed," Mr Durieux notes, "the antithesis of liberalism for a state to intervene at all times and in all places. The role of the central authority should be to complement but never to replace private enterprise. This emphasis on the initiative of the individual has brought trade and it has fostered international cooperation. This is the Liberal way of life."

Though such forthrightness may possibly disconcert some of Mr Durieux's British colleagues, on the question of European unity there will be no disagreement.

Liberals, he states, have "always strongly supported the Common Market. We trust it will give effect to all the Liberal economic and social principles".

Moreover, "for our peoples and for the individual to achieve their full potential, we Liberals are in favour of a federal system at European level and we are ready to accept a fair measure of supranational authority".

(The above is taken from notes on the political groups — available from EP London Office.)

## A permanent invalid

Agriculture in the Community "is in danger of becoming a permanent invalid". With these words the Parliament's Agriculture Committee rapporteur Jan de Koning (CD/NL) introduced a debate on the Commission's CAP price proposals for 1975/6. The Commission had proposed price increases for the various agricultural products which would result in a rise of 9 per cent in the general level of common prices. In addition it had put forward other measures including changes in beef and veal intervention arrangements and aids to beef producers, aids to farmers in hills and other less favoured areas and aids to young farmers, a batch of agrimonetary measures including 'agricultural' parity changes and changes in monetary compensation amounts. There was, however, widespread anxiety in the Parliament as to whether these measures would be sufficient to cure the patient.

Vice-President Lucien Martens (CD/Bel) illustrated the hardships which were facing the farmer. 1974 had seen unprecedented increases in farm costs, including fertiliser +23%, wages +14%, the capital burden +14.3%, overheads +23.6% and general costs +13.6%. There was an ever-growing gap between income in agriculture and outside. While it was clearly proved that agriculture had had a dampening effect upon inflation the farmer was suffering. He recalled that on March 23, 1973, farmers had been so angry about price policy that they had "smashed up" Brussels: the same day they had got price increases. Now, again a compromise was looked for. He concluded with a sombre warning "if we fail we might bring about the nationalisation of farm prices and this will be the last time we discuss them at all".

## One lean year

James Scott-Hopkins (Con/UK) argued that greater compensation in the worst hit sectors was needed to restore farmers' confidence in the Community, a view shared by Council President-in-Office Clinton. Commissioner Lardinois, however, declared that the feelings of farmers were rather too pessimistic. The whole debate should be seen in the light of the fact that the difficulties and bad harvests of 1974 had followed 1972 and 1973 which had been the two best years for farm incomes since the Second World War. After all, he declared, "politically speaking a lean year after two fat years always seems the worst". He went on to stress the need to safeguard consumers against higher prices, a point not lost on Heinz Frehsee (Soc/Ger) and other Members of the Socialist Group who tabled an amendment stating that the Commission's proposals departed from Article 39 of the Treaty of Rome in not taking into account one of the aims of the common agricultural policy, that of supplying goods to consumers at equitable prices.

Looking ahead to the spring review of the CAP (also figuring among Britain's 'renegotiation' demands), Jan Baas said that the disintegration of agricultural markets was a fact and changes in currency parities and resultant monetary compensation amounts had brought about a situation of "perpetual motion". The CAP was typical of the Community as a whole. "Finances are limited and treasuries empty; citizens are confronted with very high taxes and high unemployment. They no longer understand. They are at a loss. The goals haven't been achieved and governments haven't explained the situation to them."

For Ralph Howell (Con/UK) the way ahead should be by way of a new system, that of statutory production and marketing authorities like Britain's milk marketing board. Nicola Cipolla (Com/It) thought the CAP should be "deeply revised" to make it more suitable to the present times; what was needed was "a new agricultural policy in the interests of all of us in Europe".

## Visiting MPs

An all-party group of House of Commons Members visited the European Parliament during the January session. They were: Donald Anderson (Lab), Adam Butler (Con), Nicholas Fairbairn (Con), Peter Fry (Con), David Mudd (Con), David Penhaligon (Lib), and Mike Thomas (Lab).