

REPORT

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Arms and the Market

Parliament debates industrial aspects of defence

The long awaited and controversial report by Egon Klepsch (CD/Ger) and Tom Normanton (Con/UK) on armament production in Europe was voted through with only one amendment on Wednesday June 14. It called on the Commission to prepare an action programme "for the development and production of conventional armaments within the framework of the common industrial policy".

The Community Treaties say nothing about defence; and many Members were doubtful whether involvement in the subject was wise. In December 1975, however, Parliament voted through a report by Lord Gladwyn (Lib/UK) on the defence aspects of foreign policy co-ordination (now increasingly a Community matter). This time the starting point was industrial policy.

As the principal rapporteur, Christian Democrat (People's Party) leader Egon Klepsch, noted: "It is not possible to think in terms of a common industrial policy which does not include the military as well as civil aspect of certain key industries — in particular the construction of aircraft frames and engines, ship-building and electronics". The military market, for example, accounted for 62% of aircraft industry sales by Community States.

Further, a "common market" in armaments would save everyone a lot of money. "One of the main problems for Western Europe is that we have too many armaments industries producing too many different types of weapons in circumstances of considerable financial waste".

What about the objection — made during the debate by a number of Socialist Members — that defence was best left to other organisations like NATO? Only the Community, replied Mr. Klepsch, had the power to act in the industrial field.

But purely military matters were not absent from the debate. Conservative leader Geoffrey Rippon (UK) argued that the balance of the forces in Europe was not merely a question of the arms in existence — as important was production capacity. The Soviet Union, for example, could probably produce 1,000 battle tanks annually. "How can this compare with the economics of French production of AMX30 main battle tanks, probably of 150 tanks annually, or British Chieftan tank production of, say, 200 annually. . . ?"

Commissioner Davignon, replying to the debate, accepted that arms procurement was a legitimate subject for the Community to tackle. Among those unconvinced were the French Communists, who suggested that the whole emphasis on industry was merely a cloak for the development of a full common defence policy.

Interestingly enough, however, their view was not shared by the Italian Communists, who all voted for the report. It seemed that even a sizeable part of the Parliament's left was impressed by Tom Normanton's warning that, unless European nations got together, the result would be total dependence on the US.

An intimate relationship

The links between the European, African, Caribbean and Pacific member states of the Lomé Convention made up "an intimate relationship" said Michael Manley, the Prime Minister of Jamaica, when he met a delegation from the European Parliament on June 9 in Kingston. The Convention's Stabex (stabilisation of export earnings) system he described as "an intelligent, statesmanlike political intervention in the workings of international trade" which should be adopted on a world scale to form part of the new international economic order.

Tobago, Trinidad, Barbados and Guadeloupe were also visited by the nine-Member European Parliament delegation, which was led by Development and Cooperation Committee Chairman Colette Flesch (Lib/Lux) and included British Members Lord Castle (Soc) and John Corrie (Con).

They were able to see at first hand projects assisted by the European Development Fund, including a new health clinic at Lichfield, St. Peter, in Barbados, and a new banana plantation and microdam project in eastern Jamaica.

Sugar, rum and bananas

The previous week from May 29 to June 1, the delegation members had been in Grenada attending a meeting of the Lomé Convention Consultative Assembly's Joint Com-

mittee — currently composed of delegates from fifty-three ACP states and fifty-three members of the European Parliament. There, the talk had been of sugar and rum as well as bananas, and ways of promoting these Caribbean exports to the Community. The meeting also covered human rights and the new Convention to run from 1980, negotiations for which are due to commence this autumn. A strong resolution was also passed calling for further action to counter racialism and apartheid.



Still no go on fish

The gap between Britain and other Community nations on a common fishing policy remains as wide as ever, Commissioner Gundelach told the House on Wednesday 14 June.

He held out little hope of bridging the gap in the near future, and felt the Commission had gone about as far as it could with compromise proposals. Further modifications to meet British demands would mean a solution outside the provisions of the treaties.

Britain's intransigence came in for criticism from a number of continental MPs, who urged the Commissioner not to give up his search for a compromise formula. British Socialist group leader, John Prescott and Socialist group spokesman, Mark Hughes both warned the Commissioner of the danger of letting things slide until a British general election in the hope that Agriculture Minister, John Silkin, would be replaced by someone more amenable. They said it was vital to go for agreement now. Otherwise EEC fishing policy could become a major British election issue, with both major parties trying to outbid each other with their demands. The longer things were left, the harder it might be to get a solution.

The House also discussed proposals for patrolling Danish and Irish fishing waters and Mr. Gundelach indicated that the Commission might accept Parliament's suggestion that a greater share of the cost of this should be borne by the Community.



The skyvan development from Short Brothers of Belfast — a candidate for the Community's fishing patrol.

No go on green, either

Reporting to the House on Tuesday 13 June on this year's farm price review, Agriculture Commissioner Finn Gundelach singled out two areas where he felt substantial progress had been made.

First, the final 2.1% farm price increase agreed by the Council was

in line with the original Commission proposals, enabling the Community to "push ahead with a moderate farm price policy".

Second, agreement on proposals for aiding Mediterranean agriculture had been a "breakthrough" which could prove "historic". And the package was no "handout or bribe" — it was the beginning of a new overall policy of developing the less forward regions so the Community could function as a coherent unit.

But the Commissioner was less optimistic about bringing the so-called "green" currencies closer into line — he said the search for an automatic system of phasing out MCAs had failed. And he was again critical of nations like Britain which had unilaterally devalued their green rates in the course of the past year. Such decisions, in future, should be confined to the annual price negotiations where they could be treated "in a proper manner".

Work in peril

Wood-cutting machines for use in the furniture industry have to be imported into Britain from Germany and do not meet national safety requirements, Ron Brown (Soc/UK) told the House on Monday June 12. When Parliament was discussing plans for Community action to combat industrial diseases and accidents. Occupational diseases can remain dormant until a worker has retired, said Rapporteur Vera Squarcialupi (Comm/It) and special attention should be paid to the problems of young people, women and migrant workers.

Fire precautions

Fire safety standards in Europe's hotels are not high enough and must be improved, the House told the Commission in a debate on Monday 12 June.

Rapporteur Jim Spicer (Con/UK) said a first step would be to insist that instructions in case of fire were posted in every hotel room; that fire extinguishers were positioned in public areas, and fire exits were clearly marked. But the main objective should be to harmonize minimum fire safety standards. It was a distortion of competition that some countries used stricter — and more costly — regulations than others.

Commissioner Vredeling said steps were being taken to draw up a "basic document" on fire safety. But partly because of staff shortage, he did not anticipate rapid progress in this sphere. And he was dubious as to the value of simply putting up notices and the like — the emphasis should be on proper construction.

Anyone for tennis?

Despite scant mention of health policy in the treaties, MEPs made it clear in a debate on Monday 12 June that this is an area where they want the Community to be much more active.

Mrs. Annie Krouwel-Vlam (Soc/NL), for the Committee on Environment, raised the issue by calling for Community preventive action on cardio-vascular diseases, which, she said, were placing an intolerable financial burden on the social security systems of member states.

Much of the blame was laid on today's sedentary life style. Jim Spicer (Con/UK), seen arriving in Strasbourg with a tennis racket, said the real subject under discussion was the Western Way of Death, rather than the Western Way of Life. He wanted positive action to encourage people to keep themselves fitter.

There was strong support from Mrs. Vera Squarcialupi (Comm/It). She wanted a gymnasium where European MPs could work out. But she was quick to point out that attitudes to health were often fickle and there would be hell to pay if members' cars were not waiting outside to collect them after the session.

Slimy octopus

The Commission has to have proof of distortion of competition before it can take action against any firm, Commissioner Guido Brunner told Lord Bruce of Donington (Soc/UK) on Friday, June 16. For this reason, he could not institute an enquiry into alleged bribery in Europe by the American International Telephone and Telegraph Corporation. Lord Bruce was not satisfied. The Commission, he said, was acting as a "paper tiger" in the face of a "gigantic and slimy octopus" which had made the accusations against itself.

National authorities establish their telex charges arbitrarily but, Commissioner Brunner told Horst Seefeld (Soc/Ger) on the same day, the heads of the national telecommunications systems were to meet this year to discuss the possibility of having a standard rate.

Viking in Reverse

N.F.S. Grundtvig is possibly not that well known in British educational circles; nevertheless it is with this early 19th century Dane that is associated the idea of adult education through "folk schools" as an essential part of democracy. Now, with the coming of direct elections, his ideas are becoming relevant at

European level, and it is for this reason that about £200,000 is being allocated in the Community's 1979 budget to support adult education centres providing courses on the Community.

Debating the report on the proposal by Elaine Kellett-Bowman (Con/UK) on Friday, June 16, Parliament was on the whole enthusiastic. Andrea Mascagni, for the Communists supported the idea in Marxist terms, believing that the European voters should be aware of being "protagonists in a great historical process". But no-one knows as much about history as the Irish; and for Patrick Power (EPD/Irl) the coming of Mr. Grundtvig's ideas would go some way to make up for the destruction of the Age of Saints by the Vikings a thousand or so years before.

Housekeeping

The European Parliament approved its own draft estimates for 1979 when a report by Camillo Ripamonti (CD/It) was passed on Tuesday June 13. The total is just over 11 million EUA (£70 million) — 10.4% up on 1978. The main area of increase is in staff, particularly in the transport and information services.

Explaining the increase — which most speakers admitted to be modest — Mr. Ripamonti stressed the need to prepare for both direct elections and the work of the larger elected Parliament afterwards. Budgets Committee chairman Erwin Lange (Soc/Ger), indeed, forecast a supplementary budget later in 1979.

Why not Navaho?

There is nothing that can raise the passions of the European Parliament as much as the issue of Community languages — even on a hot Monday afternoon. Italian Members from all political groups launched a debate on "unfortunate statements by influential Commissioners" who are alleged to have hinted that six working languages may be too many.

If they have done so, they received the strong support of Tam Dalyell (Soc/UK) who put the whole matter in mathematical terms. The number of interpretation/translation operations needed (let x be the number of languages) was x times $(x-1)$: that is, 12 with the original four languages, 30 today with six, 72 with Portuguese, Greek and Spanish added. Even now, it often takes five weeks for urgent documents to be translated.

Tam's maths did not arouse much passion, but his praises of the Italian language ("if anybody says that the grand opera should be sung in a

language other than Italian, I would not go along with them"), did.

Michele Cifarelli (Lib/It) rose to protest wrathfully that Italian was not just for singing "O sole mio!" (He did not seem impressed, either, by Tam's assertion that "if Italian were my native tongue, I would be tempted to speak at much greater length than I actually do.")

Commissioner Vredeling tried to calm Members by making a distinction between the right to *speak* your own language, and the designation of a limited number of working languages (which presumably everyone would have to *read* and *understand*). Possibly the best suggestion came from Kai Nyborg (EPD/DK). If choosing French or English gave some Members an unfair advantage why not even things out by choosing one which hardly anyone spoke: i.e. Danish?

Links with Comecon

Because of Community efforts to maintain trade with Eastern bloc countries, British shipbuilders are paying a high price by selling merchant ships to the Poles, who then use them to compete against us, James Spicer (Con/UK) told the House on Thursday, June 15.

Not all Members shared this view. Kai Nyborg (EPD/Dk) felt that such problems could not be seen in isolation. Rapporteur Manfred Schmidt (Soc/Ger) spoke of dissatisfaction in Moscow that the Comecon countries did not benefit from the "most favoured nation" clause, but argued that in the context of the economic structure of state-trading countries the application of this clause would have little relevance. Commissioner Wilhelm Haferkamp reported to the House that negotiations with a view to setting up a trade agreement with Comecon would begin later in the year.

Andersen sums up

External relations rather than fishing or energy were the *forte* of the Danish Presidency, K. B. Andersen told the House on Wednesday, June 14. The Council had signed a co-operation agreement with China and had given high priority to negotiations for Greek accession. James Spicer (Con/UK), however, had misgivings about the success of the Community's links with Turkey.

Most Members called for greater cooperation at Community level in order to exert positive political influence in Africa. James Scott-Hopkins (Con/UK) called for a "blue-helmet fire brigade" for which the Lome Convention could form the basis.

QUESTION TIME

Greenland rules OK?

Greenland in the chair of the Council of Ministers? Unlikely but not impossible, according to Tam Dalyell who raised the prospect with outgoing Council President K. B. Andersen during Question Time. The situation could, in theory, arise if Greenland (pop.: 50,000) decides on a referendum to become independent of Denmark but still remained within the EEC. Some wits even suggested it could mean the interpreters and translators having to add Eskimo to their store of languages. But Tam Dalyell's point was more directed at Scotland. What, he asked, would be the institutional arrangements if Scotland decided to hive off from the UK but remain in the Community?

The weed

The Commission is compiling documentation on the problem of tobacco addiction for the meeting of the Ministers of Health on November 16, Commissioner Henk Vredeling told Bob Edwards (Soc/UK). He told Lord Kennet (Soc/UK) that he did not feel there was any point comparing the cost of fires caused by smokers with the revenue obtained from taxes on tobacco.

Identikit

Commissioner Etienne Davignon told Sir Geoffrey de Freitas (Soc/UK) that the harmonisation of travel documents must be seen in the context of security and the fight against terrorism. He told Lord Ardwick (Soc/UK) that the Council had been unable to agree on whether the heading "European Community" should appear above or below the name of the Member State on the European passport.

Jojoba plant

President Andersen told Tam Dalyell (Soc/UK) that he had insufficient information about the possibility of substituting the oil of the jojoba plant for sperm whale oil in the leather industry. He agreed, however, that the possible extinction of the whale was a serious problem.

May legislation

Parliament's success in amending draft legislation was less great in May than for some months. Twenty "Bills" were debated, of which nine were amended; but Commissioner Vredeling told Parliament on Monday June 12 that in five cases the amendments could not be accepted. Members protested after the statement that, among other things, a document should have been provided giving more details.

No Moonlighting

Will Britain's 81 Members of the elected European Parliament include no — or at best, only a handful — with parliamentary experience? That is the possible outcome of a distinct hardening of views in both the Labour and Conservative parties about the "dual mandate", whereby Members can sit in both the national and European Parliaments.

The organisation committee of the Labour Party has recommended to the national executive that the practice be banned from the first elections, even though the European Elections Act permits it. So Labour MPs really determined to stand for Europe may have to follow the lead of Sir Geoffrey de Freitas, who will not contest Kettering again but seek a separate nomination for a European seat.

On the other side of Smith Square, sentiment is not dissimilar. Margaret Thatcher has been reported as advising Members to choose between Europe and Westminster. And Conservative Party chairman Lord Thorneycroft has recently been distinctly chilly about any idea of doubling up.

Wanted: EMMB

What is the most expensive cheese in the world? Answer: Roquefort, which is made in South-West France from the milk of sheep. The costs of production are, unsurprisingly, astronomical. In addition to this, claims Michel Cointat (EPD/F) in a written question, it is discriminated against under the CAP.

About 1,500 tons of Roquefort are nevertheless exported "to many countries, particularly those with strong currencies" (and strong tastes). What Mr. Cointat wants is a special market organisation for the cheese, and a rejection of the "questionable case" for "treating ewe's milk in the same way as cow's milk". Roquefort needs, of course, a Ewes' Milk Marketing Board.

Guide Epicier

Members, staff and press could be observed on Monday June 12 examining the Spicer Report on hotel fire regulations (see p.2) with more than usual care. The reason was to be found in the Annexes — lists of the hotels most usually inhabited by Parliament and its entourage when progressing in Strasbourg or Brussels.

According to the Mayor, Brussels hotels are rated 1, 2, 3 or 'awaiting report'. Only five qualify as "1": i.e. quite safe. Four rate "3" (presumably unsafe). The Mayor commented that "it appears at this stage that a number of establishments will have to carry

out either major or minor alterations..."

The rating at Strasbourg is based on "mayoral order authorising them to operate". Twenty-two had this. A number of others did not require authorisation — but didn't comply with current French standards either. (Six of these, however, *did* comply with the previous standards.)

So far, Luxembourg has not been investigated.

Eurotalk

Eurojargon, like Franglais, seems to be something linguistic pundits love to hate but are powerless to halt. The latest coinages, by a party of precocious schoolchildren visiting the Parliament, were "Eurotics" and "Eurogenous zones". Another proof, perhaps, that Europe is about making love not war.

SDLP's first



John Hume

The first formally adopted prospective candidate for European elections in the United Kingdom is John Hume, deputy leader of the Social Democrat and Labour Party, which draws the bulk of its support from the Roman Catholic community in Northern Ireland. Unlike the rest of the UK, which will be divided into 78 single-member constituencies, Northern Ireland will comprise a single, three-member constituency, the voters being invited to vote for up to three candidates in order of preference. On this basis, Mr. Hume stands a good chance of being elected.

SF Corner

Some odd things seems to be going on in Europe. If Parliament's "rainbow" (i.e. "Hansard") is to be believed, Agriculture Commissioner Gundelach told the House on Wednesday June 14, that "we will also be looking again at the question of the size of the Commissioner" (but which?); adding, mysteriously: "then the nephrops landed".

Meanwhile, the international

"Agence Europe" reported on June 9 that Parliament's Socialist Group had been told by "Lord Hayward" that Labour would "only have 15 members out of 84" after direct elections". Precognition? And whom?

Silver Jubilee



François Mitterrand

During the June sitting at Strasbourg, the Parliament's Socialist Group became 25 years of age. To celebrate the occasion, the Palace of Europe was visited by French Socialist leader François Mitterrand, who some years ago declared an intention to stand in direct elections. At a press conference he made it clear that, as far as the French Socialists are concerned, European Union is still very much in favour.

Whatever tensions this might create — and some were clear at the press conference — the Community's Socialists are steadily edging together. The Group's Bureau has made the major organisational breakthrough of choosing an emblem for the first European Election campaign, designed by Otl Aicher who also did the Munich Olympics. It is (see below) an oblique arrow, pointing upwards—and, curiously to the right.



Emperors too

When the elected European Parliament assembles for the first time on July 10 (or maybe 17) 1979 there will almost certainly be several noble Lords in their number: the UK Act allows British Peers to stand. There may even be an Emperor. The heir to the throne of Austria, Otto von Hapsburg (currently chairman of the Pan-European Union) is reported to be seeking German citizenship so that he can become a candidate. That would be a nice triumph for democracy: the Holy Roman Emperor an elected MP.

K.P.G.