

COPY

THE LABOUR PARTY
Transport House, Smith Square, London, S.W.1.

163

TO ALL MEMBERS OF
THE SPANISH DEMOCRATS DEFENCE COMMITTEE

26th April, 1962

Dear Colleague,

A special meeting of the S.D.D.C. is being called at 5.45 p.m. on Wednesday, May 2nd to meet Miss Josefina Armillaga, who will be on a brief visit to this country. Members of the Committee will be aware of the long contact that we have had with Miss Armillaga, and the assistance that she has always given to members of the Committee who have attended as observers at trials in Madrid.

The meeting will hear a brief report of the meeting of the British members of the S.D.D.C. who met on April 17th.

At the request of the PSOE the meeting will also consider the news of the strike in Asturias and will consider whether there is any action that the S.D.D.C. can take.

I hope that you will be able to attend the meeting which will be held in a room booked in the name of Walter Padley.

Yours sincerely,

David Ennals
Secretary
Spanish Democrats Defence Committee

LABOUR PARTY

INTERNATIONAL DEPARTMENT

SPANISH DEMOCRATS' DEFENCE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the Spanish Democrats' Defence Committee held in Room D at the House of Commons on Wednesday, 2nd May, 1962.

PRESENT:

Mr. Edwards (Chairman)
Mr. E. Davies
Mr. Garcia
Mr. Girbau
Mr. Hickman
Mr. G. Jeger, M.P.
Mr. Leon
Mr. J. Clark (Secretary)

APOLOGIES:

Apologies for absence were received from Mr. Anthony Wedgwood Benn.

1. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 18th October, 1961 were approved.

On Paragraph 2(d) Mr. E. Davies requested information on the disposal of the grant of £250 (less observer's expenses) to the Basque Catholic Trade Unions.

Mr. Leon pointed out that the PSOE and Basque organisations had certain objections to the present composition of the Committee. It would not be possible to give a detailed answer to Mr. Davies' question while this situation continued.

Mr. Hickman stated that the money had been passed to the Basque Trade Unions secretary at Biarritz, and its further disposal was arranged by him.

2. British members' meeting

Mr. Jeger gave a brief account of the meeting of the British members of the Committee held on 17th April, 1962.

(a) Rome invitation

The Committee had not accepted an invitation to the Rome meeting marking the 25th anniversary of the Civil War, particularly as some Labour M.P.s. attended it, and the movement was thus represented.

(b) Trade union appeal

The trade unions had already responded with over £1,000 to the further appeal for the Committee's funds, and approaches were planned to the Constituency Labour Parties.

(c) PSOE students

£100 was provided to help the defence of five PSOE students arrested in Madrid in February.

(d) M.P.s' visits

The question of Labour M.P.s' visits to Spain would be raised with the International Sub-Committee and the National Executive Committee with a view to asking the Parliamentary Labour Party to send a letter to every Labour M.P. advising on procedure for visits to Spain, and especially on avoiding anything which could be exploited in Franco's propananda.

(e) Mr. A. Bottomley, M.P., Dr. D. Mabon, M.P., and Dr. H. King, M.P. would be asked to join the Committee.

3. Asturias and Andalucia miners' strike.

Mr. Leon said the current miners' strike in Asturias and the strike in Andalucia were the biggest since the Civil War, and he asked the Committee to do everything possible to show solidarity with the strikers, and particularly with those who had been arrested.

After discussion it was AGREED:

(a) to send a letter of protest about the arrests to the Spanish Ambassador;

(b) to ask the B.B.C. for transcripts of their Spanish language coverage of the strikes;

(c) to approach the T.U.C., requesting that they encourage action through ICFTU AND ILO;

(d) to ask the N.U.M. whether it would grant money to aid the imprisoned miners, consider sending one of its solicitors to investigate conditions on the spot, and permit the Committee to appeal for donations to its regional organisations; (it was suggested that any N.U.M. observer should preferably travel to Asturias via the U.G.T. office in Toulouse, in order to see Pascual Tomas, the General Secretary, and that on his return to Britain the Committee should arrange a public protest meeting at which he could speak);

(e) to send an observer to the trial of the prisoners.

4. Any other business

Composition of the Committee:

In view of concern expressed by the PSOE and the Basque organisations about the present composition of the Committee, it was AGREED:

that a meeting be held between British members on the one hand, and Messrs. Leon, Garcia and Hickman on the other hand, at 6 p.m. on Monday 21st May, in Room D at the House of Commons.

This concluded the business