

Annex

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1980-1981 Session

Report of Proceedings

from 15 to 19 September 1980

Europe House, Strasbourg

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Appearing at the same time as the English edition are editions in the five other official languages of the Communities: Danish, German, French, Italian and Dutch. The English edition contains the original texts of the interventions in English and an English translation of those made in other languages. In these cases there are, after the name of the speaker, the following letters, in brackets, to indicate the language spoken: (DK) for Danish, (D) for German, (F) for French, (I) for Italian and (NL) for Dutch.

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## IN THE CHAIR: MR PFLIMLIN

Vice-President

*(The sitting opened at 9 a.m.)*

President. — The sitting is open.

1. *Approval of the minutes*

President. — The minutes of proceedings of yesterday's sitting have been distributed.

Are there any comments?

The minutes are adopted.

2. *Documents received*

President. — I have received various documents, which you will find listed in the minutes.

3. *Membership of committees*

President. — I have received:

— a request from the Liberal and Democratic Group for the appointment of Mr Beyer de Ryke as member of the delegation to the Joint Parliamentary Committee of the EEC-Greece Association;

— a request from the European Democratic Group for the appointment of Mr J. M. Taylor to the Committee on Budgetary Control, to replace Mr Paterson.

Are there any objections?

The appointments are ratified.

4. *Consultative Assembly ACP-EEC*

President. — The non-attached Members of Parliament have informed me that they have nominated Mr Romualdi as representative to the EEC-ACP Consultative Assembly.

Are there any objections?

The nomination is ratified.

## Enright

out, in reply to Mr Welsh, that it is absurd nonsense to say that you will vote at 10.30 and then not vote at 10.30. Either we have procedures cut and dried in this House or we all pack up and go home.

President. — I put the motion for a resolution as a whole to the vote.

The resolution is adopted.<sup>1</sup>

I put to the vote the Calvez *et al.* motion for a resolution (Doc. 1-403/80).

The resolution is adopted.<sup>1</sup>

### 11. Persecution of Bahais in Iran

President. — The next item is the motion for a resolution by Mr Lalor and Mr Israël on behalf of the Group of European Progressive Democrats, Mr Glinne and Mrs van den Heuvel on behalf of the Socialist Group, Mr Klepsch and others on behalf of the Group of the European People's Party (CD Group), Mr Scott-Hopkins and others on behalf of the European Democratic Group, and Mr Bangemann and Mr Berkhouwer on behalf of the Liberal and Democratic Group, on the persecution of members of the Bahai community in Iran (Doc. 1-397/80/rev.).

I call Mr Israël.

Mr Israël. — (F) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, the Bahai religion is separate and distinct from the three great monotheistic movements which preceded it. However, it shares a common origin with those religions in that it accepts much of their teaching. In Iran, where this religion was born, there has been a revolution which has totally disrupted human relations. The Bahai are a religious minority of 300 000 people living within the empire of the Ayatollah Khomeini. Iran's recently adopted constitution, like all constitutions, provides in theory for the protection of religious minorities.

Unfortunately, the Bahai religion is not one of the minority religions protected by the Constitution. The reason for this omission is that in Iran followers of the Bahai faith are generally former Moslems. The fierce persecution to which they are subject is aggravated by the fact that members of the Bahai sect appear to be considered as unfaithful to Islam according to the ideas of the Ayatollah Khomeini.

In these circumstances, the followers of the Bahai faith are totally isolated and deprived of legal protection inside and outside their own country. There is no Bahai Vatican, there is not a sufficiently strong world community to protest against the fate handed out to

the Bahais in Iran. It is therefore quite natural that the Bahais should turn to us as the Parliament of Europe and that they should look to our Assembly for the support which they lack everywhere else in the world. Mr President, this Parliament would greatly add to its dignity by adopting this resolution which is moreover tabled by the five major groups in this Assembly.

President. — I call Mr Habsburg to speak on behalf of the Group of the European People's Party (Christian-Democratic Group).

Mr Habsburg. — (D) Mr President, the Group of the European People's Party has also been greatly dismayed to witness in recent months an example of religious persecution which is particularly abhorrent because the people concerned are completely defenceless. I therefore believe, as my colleague Mr Israël has said, that we must make our voice heard, although I am not generally a supporter of resolutions which have no direct bearing on European matters.

I have one further point. It has been stated here that Islam is responsible for the persecution of the Bahais. I would stress that someone like the Ayatollah Khomeini is nothing more than a traitor to Islam. The Ulemas in Morocco have already made that quite clear. Islam is a deeply tolerant faith. What Khomeini is doing is as much a travesty as were the policies of Stalin, Amin or Macías. I therefore believe it is our duty to protest most seriously, in the interests of Islam, in the interests of the peoples of Iran and also to uphold the honour of Europe.

(Applause)

President. — I call Mr Purvis to speak on behalf of the European Democratic Group.

Mr Purvis. — Mr President, having been led privately to concern for the Bahais of Iran by representatives of that faith in my part of Mid-Scotland and Fife, I found subsequently that there was widespread concern amongst my colleagues in this group, and on reaching Strasbourg this week I found myself part of a Europe-wide concern. The Bahais of Europe have put their faith in the European Parliament. They fully believe that it is through us that the protection of their co-religionists in Iran can best be safeguarded. So our constituents have placed their faith in us and we must justify that trust by wholeheartedly supporting this resolution. And I would like to see it supported right round the Chamber.

Certainly, we must also condemn the fact that European missionaries and religious figures in Iran have been imprisoned without trial and have been expelled

<sup>1</sup> OJ C 265 of 13. 10. 1980.

## Purvis

unreasonably from the country. Certainly we must express our concern for other religious minorities in Iran — the Christians and the Jews, whose security is at risk, who have been harrassed and in some cases executed. But the Bahais are altogether the most extreme case. There are over 300 000 in Iran. Their faith is tolerant of other religions. Their faith does not permit involvement in politics, but enjoins loyalty and obedience to the government of their country. And yet the Prime Minister of Iran has vowed to rid the country of the Bahais. Why? They surely pose no threat to the stability of either his government or his country. Their sacred places have been destroyed. They have been harrassed from their homes and villages. They have been dispossessed of their property. They have been removed from government jobs. They are being pressed to recant their faith. They have been arrested and imprisoned, and some have been executed after secret, so-called trials. Their leaders are even now held incommunicado in prison, and one can but fear for their lives. They are not even recognized as a religious minority, as other religious minorities are. In fact, the Iranian government claims they don't exist! The registration of their births, marriages and deaths is not permitted and so they do not exist.

For these reasons, my colleagues in the European Democratic Group join wholeheartedly with colleagues throughout the European Parliament and all our constituents, Bahai and non-Bahai, throughout Europe, in an appeal directed to the Iranian Government to observe the basic human rights of their Bahai countrymen, and we ask the Council of Ministers and the Member States to use all the pressure that they can muster with the Iranian Government to ensure that these tolerant and peaceful people are protected in their homeland.

(Applause)

President. — I call Mr Hahn.

Mr Hahn. — (D) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, it is particularly gratifying that all the groups in this House should stand up for the Bahai religion and plead for tolerance to be shown towards it in Iran. We can only say that it is particularly abhorrent that persecution on religious grounds can still occur in the 20th century. What is happening in Iran at the moment can only be compared with what happened to the Jews under Hitler's so-called Third Reich. The tactics are almost exactly the same as they were then in Germany: the leaders of Bahais are being murdered, they are being killed and executed, temples are being destroyed, these people are being stripped of all rights and their children expelled from schools. Ladies and gentlemen, when such action claims to be taken in the name of a religion, it can only bring that religion itself into disrepute.

I agree with my colleague Mr Habsburg that this is not the nature of Islam. Precisely because we say 'yes' to religion we must protest at its exploitation for such repressive and destructive measures against a large minority within a people and within a State such as Iran. The whole House should speak out against this.

President. — I call Mr Provan.

Mr Provan. — What we are discussing this morning is really a cover-up of what is taking place in Iran today, and if it had not been the case that had been brought forward so eloquently by the Bahais in Europe, this might not well have been discussed this morning. It is a cover-up because we have fanatical factions roaming the streets and the countryside of Iran, secret courts, imprisonments, murder, all of which is going ahead in the name of religion, but it is not religion at all. It is religious persecution, because the Iranian authorities are looking for a scapegoat. They are trying to deceive their people: one deception is the use of a previous British Ambassador's signature on a document, and yet he ceased to be Ambassador four years ago.

Religious persecution, Mr President, of the Bahais — yes, and of Christians also. The Christians basically in Iran are ethnic groups, and therefore it is persecution of ethnic minorities within Iran as well as religious persecution. But it is the religious persecution that we abhor most, because these religious bodies thought that with the arrival of Ayatollah Khomeiny they were going to get some help. They were deceived, and Christianity itself is only receiving lip service as a recognized religion.

What is the history of this? In the first months since the revolution, we have had an Anglican priest murdered. In the second month, we have had a hospital taken over, and unfortunately the health standards are very much lower because of it. We have had other hospitals seized, and the Anglicans are not allowed to do their business. I support very strongly indeed the third paragraph of the motion, which refers to other religious minorities, because Bishop Dequani Tafti's son has been murdered and now we also find his secretary, Jean Waddell, who is a constituent of mine in East Scotland, in prison. We do not know where she is, we do not know what her fate is; she has already faced attempted murder when she was molested and imprisoned, and we know not what is going to happen. We are not allowed any access whatsoever to her to find out, and this cannot be applauded by anybody who thinks properly and sanely in the Western world.

Therefore, Mr President, I ask this Parliament to support most strongly an amendment which has been put forward — Amendment No 1, which requests the Commission and Council of the European Communities to impose an embargo on all sales of surplus prod-

Provan

ucts to Iran where subsidies are involved, so that human rights can be restored to Iranian citizens.

President. — I call Mr Natali.

Mr Natali, *Vice-President of the Commission*. — (I) Mr President, the Commission shares the deep concern expressed in the two motions for resolutions over the fate of the Bahai Community and will do everything in its power to comply with the vote of the European Parliament.

President. — I call Mr Romualdi.

Mr Romualdi. — (I) Mr President, I should just like to say that the Italian non-attached Members share the indignation and protest expressed by all the groups in this Parliament at the action being taken against the right to life and religious liberty of the Bahai in Iran. We shall therefore vote in favour of this resolution in the name of freedom for all faiths and for the defence of the lives of all those who profess their religious belief.

President. — I call Mrs Dekker.

Mrs Dekker. — (NL) Mr President, I also want briefly to express my full support for the resolutions on the persecution of the Bahai community in Iran, and I am pleased that they are finding such clear and broad support in this Parliament. I agree that the Bahais' case has been well stated in the European Parliament, and I therefore hope that our clear condemnation of this situation will also apply to other groups now being persecuted because of their religion, particularly in Iran. I am thinking of the Jews and of the Christians, but this should apply in general to groups which are persecuted because of their religion, race or sex, or on the basis of any other distinction.

President. — The debate is closed.

We shall now consider the motion for a resolution.

(Parliament adopted the preamble and paragraphs 1 to 4)

After paragraph 4, I have Amendment No 1, tabled by Mr Hord and others, seeking to insert a new paragraph:

- 4 a. Requests the Commission and Council of the European Communities to impose an embargo on all sales of surplus agricultural products to Iran where subsidies by European taxpayers are involved until full human rights are restored to Iranian citizens.

(Parliament adopted Amendment No 1 and paragraph 5)

I can now give the floor for explanations of vote.

I call Mr Papapietro.

Mr Papapietro. — (I) Mr President, just a very brief statement. We should have supported this motion for a resolution if there had not been a purely technical error. The motion tabled is different from that which was discussed.

However, we support the principle of the motion for a resolution and will vote for it, expressing our total solidarity with the followers of the Bahai religion who are being so ruthlessly persecuted.

President. — I call Mr Prag.

Mr Prag. — Mr President, I just want to explain why I voted against the amendment.

Very simply, it was because I think that when we pass a resolution of this kind, it must be in order to achieve an effect. I am afraid that, given the present state of mind of the Iranian Government, we are not likely to do a great deal of good with paragraph 4 a.

Unofficially, there are some 450 000 Bahais in Iran, rather than the official figure of 300 000. I think they are all in danger. We can, perhaps, prevent a quite appalling pogrom, which is what they are threatened with. If children dare to be born, they are illegitimate. If people dare to marry — because their marriage cannot be recognized — they are accused of prostitution.

If we are to prevent a quite appalling massacre, we should have kept our resolution a little more moderate than it now becomes with Amendment No 1. That is why I voted against the amendment. But I do hope that the power of this Parliament, through its unanimous resolution, will be recognized by the Iranian Government and that we shall see some moderation of their appalling treatment of the Bahai faith.

President. — I call Mrs Kellett-Bowman.

Mrs Kellett-Bowman. — I voted for the amendment for the perfectly simple reason that all too often this Parliament seeks to take action with words only. This would be a practical way in which we could help to bring home to the Iranian Government our very strong feelings in support of the Bahai community.



President. — I call Mr Harris.

Mr Harris. — As co-author of the amendment, I would like to support the last speaker in this, although I do respect the views of my colleague, Mr Prag. I can see that it is a finely balanced argument. Very often we in this place need to focus on matters which are within our own competence. This is a matter within the competence of this Parliament, or at least the shared competence of this Parliament. I think the amendment highlights the relevance of this Parliament to this particular issue. I feel that we must take a stand on this, particularly as we understand that considerable amounts of subsidized food are being supplied to Iran, and that we really should speak out as a parliament on this issue. I do not think we can just shirk it.

President. — I put the motion for a resolution as a whole to the vote.

The resolution is adopted.<sup>1</sup>

## 12. Events in Bolivia

President. — The next item is a joint debate on

- the motion for a resolution by Mr Glinne and others on behalf of the Socialist Group, Mr Klepsch and Mr Blumenfeld on behalf of the Group of the European People's Party (Christian-Democratic Group), Mr Fergusson on behalf of the European Democratic Group, Mrs Caretoni Romagnoli, and Mr Berkhouwer on behalf of the Liberal and Democratic Group, on the events in Bolivia (Doc. 1-381/80/rev.); and
- the motion for a resolution by Mr Fanti and others, on behalf of the Communist and Allies Group, on relations between the EEC and the new régime in Bolivia (Doc. 1-385/80).

I call Mr Papapietro.

Mr Papapietro. — (I) Mr President, we shall vote in favour of the motion tabled by the other groups (Doc. 1-381/80/rev.). We should have preferred also to vote for our own motion (Doc. 1-385/80), because it contains an extra element — namely, the implied recognition of the lawful government elected by universal suffrage, which does not feature in the other motion. The other motion, however, is satisfactory in all other respects. We shall therefore vote for the other motion and ask that ours be dealt with pursuant to Rule 25 of the Rules of Procedure.

President. — I call Mr Fergusson.

Mr Fergusson. — Mr President, I very much welcome what we have just heard from the other side of the House. For the second time in a week we have the whole House, everybody and every group in the House, prepared to back a parliamentary resolution. It comes almost without any kind of opposition evident at all. The House is at one in condemning what has happened in Bolivia, just as it was at one, or to all intents and purposes at one, in expressing its fears and congratulations in respect of Poland.

On behalf of my group, I wish to support this motion because we want to lend our voices to those which have already been raised throughout the world to condemn the *coup* in Bolivia. This *coup* is particularly repugnant because it took place immediately after a free and fair election. The weight of military repression was brought to bear on the Bolivian people because they had taken advantage of their opportunity to express their views, and the colonels there, as we know, have now set their face against what they quite cynically describe as any further electoral adventures. We can only regret this. Obviously we all have different views about democracy and about military dictatorships, but we all regret it whenever a military dictatorship supersedes a civil administration. However, we may perhaps make some instructive comparison between this *coup* and another, which we discussed earlier this week, in Turkey, where the political parties had reached a stalemate and the military, on taking power, immediately swore, with a very good record on the same thing behind them, from the outset to provide a speedy return to democracy. One might also contrast what has happened in Bolivia with the other Andean Pact countries, notably Peru, whose new and freely-elected government took office in July this year.

I would draw the attention of the House particularly to the second indent of paragraph 4, because the justification here for this very short debate and a rather long resolution is that for once there is action which the Community has taken and can take to counter what has happened. Therefore, Mr President, support this motion and express the hope that this resolution, and the action taken by the Commission and the Heads of Government of the Nine, will not bring about a speedy end to this very dark period of Bolivian history.

President. — I call Mr Bersani to speak on behalf of the Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democratic Group).

<sup>1</sup> OJ C 265 of 13. 10. 1980.

