

SUMMARY OF THE SPEECH BY MR. DE GROOTE,

MEMBER OF THE EURATOM COMMISSION

to the fifth general meeting of the ICFTU Trade Unions of the  
six member countries

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First and foremost, I want to underline the significance of the backing given by the trade-union movements to the equipment of Europe with a structure and a consistency which will enable it to play its part in the world of tomorrow, the more so as the will to build Europe is at present manifestly stronger and less spasmodic in the sphere of workers' and employers' organisations than at government level.

There are those who allege today that the Communities with a more technological avocation, such as Euratom, are dead or moribund. Such attacks are doubtless all the more destructive as they are aimed at more concrete projects, since activities are less vulnerable in proportion as they are of a general, and thus less specific, nature; a man of political science has to endure arguments, but a man of action has to suffer accusations.

When the issue is the Community's future couched in vague terms, matters are comparatively easy. In sectors as controversial as agriculture or as hard-hit as coal, the situation becomes infinitely more difficult. Where new sectors such as nuclear energy are concerned, these are special preserves, national or other pride is sensitive, monopolistic hopes are threatened, and those who do not want only one section of society to foot the bill for innovations and changes in the old order are perennially liable to be accused of timidity.

There is a more deep-seated explanation for the severity or ingratitude of a section of public opinion, namely the growing gulf between technology and politics. The technologists have the know-how and the politicians have the power of decision, but the link-up between these two major sectors of activity is increasingly difficult to establish and thus the way is open for regionalism, technological nationalism and technocracy. In the final analysis, those who serve to stabilise democracy either play an incomplete part or no part at all.

We must be on our guard, for the dangers hanging over the technological Communities are particularly serious in view of the prospect of the merger of the Communities; for they threaten to consolidate the impotence at Community level to tackle the intractable problem of growing incompatibility between technology and politics.

Amputation of Europe's two technological wings would result in a reduction or sterilisation of future Community activities. The trade unions are fully alive to the magnitude of this problem

and their co-operation was very much in evidence at Stresa and Munich. This course must be maintained, as the world of action has frequently been a jump or two ahead of the institutional world; may the institutions be swept forward by the forces of production, embodying the forces of labour !