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The Stakes Involved in the 12th World Congress are Fundamental for the Fourth International

The following declaration was submitted in October 1982 by the following members of the Bureau of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International: Allio, LCR (France); Claudio, LCR (Italy); Clelia, LCR (France); Duret, PSO (Switzerland); Frej, SP (Sweden); Jones IMG (Britain); Segur (Daniel Bensaïd), LCR (France); Walter, RWL (Belgium).

1. The pre-12th World Congress (6th since reunification) debate is taking place in an international situation characterised essentially by two features. On the one hand there is an uneven upsurge of the working masses on an international level under the impact of a long and deep capitalist crisis. And on the other hand an overall military, economic and political counteroffensive by imperialism (particularly U.S. imperialism) which has made some gains. The counteroffensive is hampered by the effects of the recession on imperialism itself (inter-imperialist contradictions, crisis of bourgeois leadership), by the numerous struggles of resistance to austerity policy within the imperialist countries, and by the extreme precariousness of the economic situation and explosiveness of many dependency countries.

There are more and more crises both nationally and on an international scale. Political turns take place one after another at a sustained pace. It has been proved that the weak links of imperialism can be broken

and in Nicaragua we see that a new workers state could be set up. This in turn increases the possibility of contradictions inside the imperialist system and favours the development of workers and mass struggles (anti-war movement) in the imperialist countries.

At the same time there is a combination of the repercussions of the imperialist economic crisis and the disastrous effects of bureaucratic management on the regimes ruled by the bureaucracies. The political revolution is shown, in the most immediate sense of the term, as the best defence of the essential gains of the workers states. A new phase in the decline of these regimes was opened with the rise of the political revolution in Poland. The workers resistance to the counter-revolution launched by Jaruselski and the Soviet bureaucracy is an indication of the radical rupture between the totalitarian bureaucratic caste and the working masses.

A confrontation between the capitalist class and its allies on the one side and the working class and its allies on the other is developing on a world scale. The success or failure of one or the other of these camps in each of the particular confrontations conditions the developments of the other struggles. Thus the crisis of international revolutionary leadership and the possibilities of advancing in resolving it become clearer.

2. In the international confrontations between the working class (and its allies) and the imperialist forces, the latter find support not only from the dependent bourgeoisies but also from the ruling bureaucracies and the bureaucratic apparatuses of the workers movement. The conflicts and contradictions that can and will emerge between these forces must not obscure this fundamental fact.

The deepening of class conflicts on an international level underlines with particular force the dialectical unity of the sectors of the world revolution. It expresses the actuality of the class struggle on a world scale and not a confrontation between “blocs”: on the one side imperialism and on the other the “socialist camp” and the “progressive” bourgeoisie and petty-bourgeois forces. Developments in Central America or the Middle East confirm this. The passivity of the Soviet bureaucracy, encumbered with an economic crisis, as well as the policy of various Arab regimes during the Zionist aggression in Lebanon, illustrate it.

Strategically the workers will emancipate themselves through the overthrow of the imperialist and capitalist forces, the parasitic bureaucracies, as well as politically defeat their agents in the workers movement.

Two wrong political lines can develop with respect to this. The first covers over this strategic task of the proletariat and its allies in the name of the real necessity (for example) unconditionally supporting semi-colonial states against an imperialist attack (it subordinate the battle for class independence to the priority of the “anti-imperialist” struggle). Or else, in the name of the necessary defence of the fundamental gains of the bureaucratically deformed or degenerated workers states against an imperialist offensive, it relegates the anti-bureaucratic revolution to second place in the process of world revolution. The second orientation can result in devaluing the importance, especially in the imperialist countries of taking an unambiguous position during a confrontation between imperialism and a semi-colonial country (independently of its political regime) or again to give up our traditional position of

defence of the fundamental gains of the workers state against imperialism.

3. The development of the class struggle on the international scale, the accentuation of its proletarian character confirms in its general dynamic the actuality of the Fourth International's programme.

Thus the dynamic of workers struggles in Poland and the type of demands put forward by the workers verify for the first time with such clarity our programme of political revolution and socialist democracy.

In the same way our strategy of permanent revolution is confirmed by the extension of the Central American revolution, by the rapid explosion of the antagonisms between the social forces regrouped and led by the FSLN and those represented by the bourgeois politician Robelo, the Catholic hierarchy and the bosses organised in COSEP, and by the objectives and way forward adopted by the Central American masses in struggle. It applies in the same way to the battle in favour of class independence, for example under the form of building the Workers Party in Brazil or the defence of the workers own institutions in Iran, the Shoras, submitted to the repression of Khomeini's regime.

The struggle against bourgeois austerity policy and the class collaboration line of the reformist apparatuses underlines the present-day relevance of transitional demands and the value of the united front tactic.

For us that constitutes a starting point for the present building of the International. This increases the possibilities of the development of our forces and influence.

But here a supplementary element must be introduced. The joint crisis of imperialism

and Stalinism as well as a new phase of political decline of the nationalist currents stimulate differentiations and clarifications inside the international workers movement and the petty-bourgeois nationalist currents. To advance the strengthening of the Fourth International it is decisive to understand the importance of this overall, contradictory process.

However to seize the possibilities which are open to us we must look systematically at our own weaknesses – on the level of political elaboration and our capacity to link up with those currents breaking the mould of social democracy, stalinism, centrism or nationalism. At the same time it is necessary to boldly take up all problems linked to proletarianisation of our sections.

The World Congress must be the occasion for organising a discussion on this question to respond to the real needs of building sections of the International.

4. In the present international context there is increasing pressure aiming to get people to adopt a political line which defines the dividing line of international confrontations in terms of a struggle between "opposed social systems." This is expressed in organisations like the Chilean MIR, the Fedayeen majority in Iran, nationalist currents in the Basque country, ect. The result is clear, for example, support for the Polish bureaucracy against the workers upsurge in Poland or adaptation to the Khomeini regime, characterised as "anti-imperialist."

The breadth of the imperialist counterattack and the character of the Reagan administration are often used as a justification for such an orientation. Another fundamental feature of this "campist" approach is related to a particular appreciation of the

international situation. It consists in transforming the war danger (which is real) into a generalised war danger is already being concretised in the form of American imperialism's counteroffensive in Central America or the Middle East. An equal sign is thus put between local and regional counterrevolutionary wars (against the rise of colonial revolution) and a world war. A continuity is introduced between these counterrevolutionary wars (which have marked the history of imperialism since the Second World War) and a world war.

Such an explicit or more or less implicit analysis of the international situation has in reality two results:

a) The confrontations between the classes on a world scale with all their aspects are not taken as the starting point of analysis and orientation; crisis of imperialist leadership; exacerbated contradictions inside the degenerated or deformed workers states; counterrevolutionary role of the stalinist bureaucracy's policy; and counterrevolutionary policy of the dependent bourgeoisies against the workers and peasant masses.

b) It orders the strategic political tasks of revolutionaries around an axis of regroupment and consolidation of the progressive forces (inside of which the so-called "socialist" camp plays a key role). This implies a judgement on the effects of the policy of the Soviet bureaucracy! The latter is no longer considered as a counterrevolutionary forces, either on the basis of its role in the USSR and in the Eastern European countries, or on the basis of its international policy in terms of the interests of the masses.

5. Inside the Fourth International an orientation, within which the adaptation to "cam-

pism” begins to be revealed as a significant element, has been developed by several sections’ leaderships: the SWP (United States), SAL (New Zealand), LOR/RWL (Canada) and SWP (Australia). It comes for example in various contributions from the SWP (U.S.) leadership although it has not submitted any resolution at the last two IEC meetings in 1981 and 1982. Adaptation to the overall policy of the Castroist leadership, an evaluation of the international situation (imminence of war) as well as the role of bourgeois or petty-bourgeois nationalist forces in the process of the colonial revolution – all these elements interact and mutually reinforce each other. The consequence is a conception of the priority tasks for the International which are drawn up in terms of the hierarchical importance given to different sectors of the world revolution. There is also the beginning of wide-ranging programmatic revisions (on the permanent revolution or the political revolution). This is the origin of the debate on the content and forms of solidarity with Solidarnosc, after the 13th December, on the perspectives of the Iranian revolution, or again the differences on the *overall* policy of the PLO leadership.

The result of this line is the answer given by the SWP (U.S.) leadership to the building of the International – regroup the revolutionary forces, among whom is the Fourth International, around the Castroist leaderships and the new revolutionary leaderships which have emerged in Nicaragua and Grenada. For the SWP this is already the axis for the building of mass revolutionary International.

6. The position developed by the SWP leadership reflects debates inside certain currents

of the workers movement, under the combined influence of the victory of the Vietnamese revolution, the rise of revolutionary struggles in Latin America and the full blooded imperialist counteroffensive. Therefore discussion inside the International once again expresses real political problems posed by the class struggle on a world scale. Our disagreement with the SWP leadership’s positions should not at all obscure this aspect of the problem.

We can draw one conclusion – the pre-World Congress debate must allow us to verify those points of the present disagreements which flow from the differences over the conjuncture, the relationship of forces in such or such a country or region of the world, or the policy of the Cuban leadership in such or such a situation *and those* which flow from more systematic disagreements on the dialectic of the three sectors of the world revolution, the role in this framework of the policies of the ruling bureaucracies, the national bourgeoisies and the bourgeois or petty bourgeois nationalist leaderships.

This discussion on building the International needs to clarify first of all these questions. It is within this framework that we must place the debate on building the International; on the political character and line of the Cuban leadership and our relations with it.

Once we are clear on these questions it is then also possible to have a polemic with currents (for example the Lambertists) which have displayed blind sectarianism to revolutionary upsurges and victories during the Vietnamese and Central American revolutions.

These revolutions are “analysed” either as a simple result of the pressure of the masses

on the Vietnamese CP or the FSLN, or that these leaderships with a majority in the mass movement but fiercely opposed to taking power were supposedly forced by the masses to seize power in order not to be outflanked by them! Sectarianism and negation of reality are here marvelously combined! This leads to a conception of building the International which marginalizes it from the real processes of recomposition and differentiations in the workers movement and the revolutionary forces internationally. Political and organisational sectarianism are thus logically intertwined.

7. In light of the possibilities opening for the building of the International and of its present debates, it seems to us necessary to focus as a priority the discussion of the 13th World Congress on:

- 1) the present phase of the world revolution;
- 2) the building of the International in this framework.

► The World Congress must take a position on these questions. It alone can do this with political authority. It is concrete necessity for the functioning and building of the International to define an orientation and line and elect a leadership on this basis. To organise the World Congress around such axes means diluting the the overall political definition of the International and its sections, blocking its functioning as an International and holding back its activity and that of its sections. It would particularly reduce present possibilities of building the International.

► Indeed programmatic and theoretical discussions (on the permanent revolution, the workers and peasants government, etc.) must

be started today. This is already the case. But these debates need time. It would be doubtlessly premature at this World Congress to vote on these questions as such before they can be adequately dealt with by the membership in the sections. Or else that would imply a postponing of the World Congress with all the negative consequences pointed out above for the building of the International. Discussion on these questions can and must be prolonged beyond the World Congress. It can also be the subject of a public discussion. The permanent revolution of the Fourth International. Either it is a question of enriching these gains and this must be done in the light of a real synthesis of unfolding revolutionary experiences. Or it is a case of questioning these programmatic gains. In the latter case we would need a congress of programmatic re-definition, and “extraordinary” congress.

Around the question of “Building the International in the present period” we can discuss the following: the political character and overall political line of the Cuban leadership and our relations with it; the policy of sections towards the process of differentiations and regroupments on the international scale (see the May 1981 IEC resolution part

6 and Segur’s report at the May 1982 IEC, English-language *IIDB*, No. 6); the more specific problems of building sections, among others and above all the systematic implantation of sections in sectors of the industrial proletariat and their trade union work (see Frej’s report at the May 1982 IEC, English-language *IIDB*, No. 7).

Emphasising these two questions allows us to organise the discussion for the 12th World Congress and to make it more functional and accessible for our membership.

Given the importance of the *political revolution in Poland*, and the possibility the International has of verifying and enriching our conceptions and the programme of the political revolution in light of its lessons, we must absolutely keep this point on the World Congress agenda. Similarly we must integrate the development of *the revolution in Central America*. Also the World Congress, in line with the 11th World Congress decision, must definitively decide on the resolutions dealing with “The dictatorship of the proletariat and Socialist democracy,” its key importance has been demonstrated by development in the political debate.

By focusing the World Congress agenda in this way we respond to a dual necessity – to

have a clearer debate and to hold the World Congress within a reasonable time limit (and the end of 1983) while ensuring a real participation of the sections’ membership in the discussion.

But such a choice implies that questions just as important for our sections and the International are not put on the agenda – such as the situation in France, the Iranian revolution, or developments in the Middle East. Before the World Congress these points must be put on the agenda of international leadership meetings and the subject of discussions and resolutions worked out in collaboration with the leaderships of the organisations concerned. *The conclusions reached in these resolutions should be integrated both in the resolution on the present stage of the world revolution and in the one on building the International.*

The debate opened in the Fourth International for its 12th World Congress is fundamental. It is concerned very much with the relationship between the world situation and the possibilities of building the Fourth International, in effect on the validity of the programmatic foundations of the Fourth International in this period of world revolution and the party-building tasks linked to that.