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Statutes of the Fourth International

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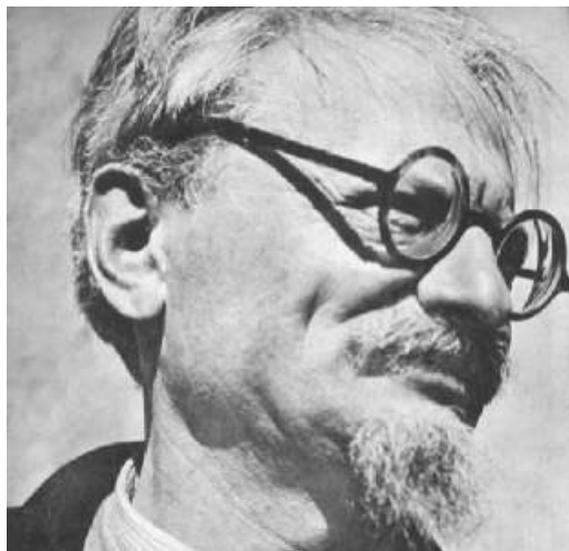
Description:

The Fourth International - an international organisation struggling for the socialist revolution - is composed of sections, of militants who accept and apply its principles and programme. Organised in separate national sections, they are united in a single worldwide organisation acting together on the main political questions, and discussing freely while respecting the rules of democracy.

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PREAMBLE

1 The Fourth International - an international organisation struggling for the socialist revolution - is composed of sections, of militants who accept and apply its principles and programme. Organised in separate national sections, they are united in a single worldwide organisation acting together on the main political questions, and discussing freely while respecting the rules of democracy.



2 The aim of the Fourth International is to help the awakening of political consciousness and to help the organisation of the proletariat and other classes exploited by imperialism in all countries, in order to abolish capitalism with its oppression, poverty, insecurity, its wars and bloodshed. It seeks to establish a democratic socialist society, based on the principle that the emancipation of the working class and all the oppressed and exploited will be the "the work of the workers themselves", the first step to a future classless society. In order to ensure, in a democratically planned economy, an enduring peace, social equality, the defence of the environment, the struggle against all oppressions, and human solidarity.

3 The Fourth International seeks to incorporate in its programme the progressive social experiences of humanity. It bases itself, by keeping them alive, on the gains of the revolutionary Marxist movement drawing the indispensable lessons from the Paris Commune, the October 1917 Revolution in Russia, the gains and discussions of the first four congresses of the Third International, the struggle and the elaboration of the Left Opposition to Stalinism, the Transitional Programme adopted at its Founding Congress in 1938, and the key programmatic documents adopted by its congresses since then.

4 It is with this transitional approach, starting from immediate struggles to the break with capitalism and the bureaucracies that the Fourth International turns to the future in fighting (for):

- ▶ For the immediate and transitional demands of the wage-earners.
- ▶ For democratic rights and public freedoms.

Statutes of the Fourth International

- ▶ For a revolutionary break with capitalism; for the replacement of the bourgeois state by producers' own state administration; for the growing over, in the dominated countries, of democratic and national struggles into revolutionary, anti-capitalist ones.
- ▶ For democratic socialism based on the social property of the social means of production, the self-organization of workers, the self-determination of peoples and the protection of public liberties, with the separation of parties and the state.
- ▶ For the unity of the mass, people's and working class movement on democratic basis, respecting multi-partyism, the diversity of tendencies and ensuring independence vis-à-vis the bourgeoisie and the state.
- ▶ For extending self-organization and respect for democratic rights in the struggles.
- ▶ Against all parasitic bureaucracies (Stalinist, social-democrat, trade union, nationalist...) dominating mass organizations.
- ▶ Against women's oppression and for an autonomous women's movement.
- ▶ Against oppression of lesbians and gays and all forms of sexual oppression.
- ▶ Against national oppression, for the respect of the right to self-determination and the independence of oppressed peoples.
- ▶ Against racism and all forms of chauvinism.
- ▶ Against religious particularisms and for the separation of religion and state.
- ▶ For the environment from an anti-capitalist and anti-bureaucratic perspective.
- ▶ For active internationalism and international anti-imperialist solidarity, for the defence of the working masses' interests in every country, with no exclusions, no sectarianism, without any submission to diplomatic or utilitarian considerations.
- ▶ To build revolutionary, proletarian, feminist, democratic parties of active members in which the rights of free expression and tendency are granted and guaranteed.
- ▶ To build a mass, pluralistic, revolutionary International.

5 The national sections constitute the basic organisational units of the Fourth International. The aim of every national section is to bring together all the forces which share our common goals to build a mass revolutionary Marxist party capable of playing a decisive role in the class struggle within the country to a successful conclusion in a socialist victory. This is the means through which the Fourth International aspires to achieve its great emancipating goal since an international organisation does not replace or substitute for a national leadership in acting in a revolution.

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CHAPTER I

THE SECTIONS

Article 1

The International is made up of national sections, which subscribe to the principles laid out in the preamble to its statutes, participate in its activities and organizational life, and pay the agreed dues. National sections are rooted in the reality of their countries' class struggles while building the International together, including by committing people and resources to it. The dues to be paid to the International are agreed with the section leaderships taking into account their resources.

Article 2

Sections of the International integrate the political line that has been decided by the International into their political practice by their own free consent. They can express their own positions publicly, always provided that they do not cross the double demarcation line of opposition to capitalism and imperialism. A section of the Fourth International has however the obligation to make public the resolutions adopted by the leading bodies of the FI. It can propose to the following World Congress to change these positions.

Article 3

In order for the International to be effective the ranks of revolutionaries identifying with the FI should be united in each country. For this reason members of the International should act in such a way as to bring about such unity within the framework of one unified section of the International. This section may be an independent organisation or a current within a unified party of anti-capitalist forces, in which members of the International can be active without giving up their programmatic identity. In countries where a section has been recognised by the World Congress the International leadership will conduct relations with other political groups with the agreement of the section. Members of national sections elected to bourgeois parliamentary bodies are to follow the guidelines laid out by the national sections and be accountable to the leading bodies and congresses of the formations they represent.

Article 4

The internal life of the sections must be based on democratic norms and principles guaranteeing collective participation in discussions, decision and control of the application of decisions, and creating a climate in which all comrades feel able to participate on the basis of mutual respect.

These norms and principles include:

a) that information, draft texts and those adopted should be available to all comrades both at national and international level;

b) that the mandating of delegates is prohibited: in other words, no matter what the position of an elective body is, its delegates must be free to vote according to their own conscience and convictions as shaped by the discussion at a congress or convention;

c) that immediate report backs are made before the appropriate body by elected delegates to local, national or international (World) congresses;

d) that the necessary measures are taken to ensure that these democratic rights are really exercised without any category or sector of the membership suffering from any form of socio-cultural, gender or other oppression, including the right to self-organisation on the basis of gender, sexual, national, racial or other oppression.

Article 5

The sections of the International recognize and practice the right of tendency and faction in their ranks, that is: the right of political minorities to meet in order to organize the defence of their point of view in the organization's internal debates; the right of these minorities to express their own opinions within the organization, or even publicly through means agreed on by the organization's leading bodies; the right to be represented in these leading bodies; the right to proportional representation at the organization's congresses; and the right to communicate their opinions to the International. Minority tendencies have the duty to respect the unity and discipline of the organization as it carries out in practice the political decisions of its majority.

Article 6

In cases of disciplinary action, comrades shall be provided with written charges. They will also be provided with the opportunity to make a full reply to these charges. Wherever possible, comrades will be provided with the opportunity to confront their accusers. Any member or group of members of the International against whom a national section has taken sanctions may, once they have exhausted the procedures available to them within the framework of the section, appeal to the International. The International will charge a commission to investigate and report to the appropriate leadership body, which will take a decision about the sanction that has been challenged, as appropriate. Sections are required to comply with the International's decisions in disciplinary matters. The non-respect of organisational norms is incompatible with affiliation with the International. Nevertheless, a national section subjected to a disciplinary decision taken by an intermediate level international body may appeal to the next highest body of the International.

Article 7

To recognise that in varying conditions there will be organisations which support the FI and are not yet able or ready to assume the responsibilities of sections the World Congress, or its elected IC, can grant the formal status of sympathising organisation to such groups. Sympathising organisations publicise the positions and promote the press of the FI, support and participate in internal and external FI activities and make a regularised contribution to the FI.

Representatives of sympathising organisations will be invited to meetings of the IC and to the World Congress where they will be granted voice, and are entitled to cast consultative votes in cases where the criterion of formal financial contribution has been met. The goal of the formal status of sympathising organisation is to provide a bridge to the development of national sections in the countries concerned.

Article 8

Organizations who share the International's perspective of struggle but do not wish to join it formally can obtain the status of "permanent observer". This status enables organizations to participate in meetings of leading bodies - which bodies will be specified in each case - with the right to speak but not to vote.

CHAPTER II

LEADERSHIP BODIES

Article 9

The International's highest decision-making body is its World Congress, which meets at least once every five years on the call of the International Committee at least six months in advance which is the minimum period of preparatory discussion. A special World Congress can be convoked at any time by the International Committee or one third of the sections.

As the climax of a process of democratic discussion and election of delegates among the national sections, the World Congress determines the political line of the International as a whole on all programmatic issues. On questions involving the national sections the World Congress serves as the final appeal and decision-making body.

The Congress is made up of elected delegates from national sections, represented in proportion to the numbers of their activists, with a minimum representation of one person per section whatever its size. A section's votes may be divided among the members of its delegation if for exceptional practical reasons the delegation has fewer members than the representation the section is entitled to by its size. Inversely, two delegates may share the vote of a section that is only entitled to one vote.

Article 10

The Congress makes its decisions by an absolute majority of votes on political and organizational issues, and by a simple majority of delegates, on procedural issues. It decides by an absolute majority on admitting new sections, and by a two-thirds majority on disaffiliating any section. It is the only body with the right to amend or modify the International's statutes, by a two-thirds majority.

Article 11

The World Congress elects a named body of 3 or 5 comrades belonging to different sections and not members of international leading bodies all of whom enjoy the respect of the international membership as an "Appeals Commission". It investigates cases involving violations of discipline, or our ethics, on the request of the International Committee or its own initiative, and investigates complaints concerning the procedures followed by the international leadership. The membership of the Appeals Commission must comprise enough women that it can sit as an all-women body should that be requested in any appropriate case the Appeals Commission will hear. It reports to the International Committee and recommends the action to be taken. It is accountable to the World Congress following that which elected it.

The disciplinary action that can be recommended includes suspension from membership and expulsion from the International.

Article 12

The highest decision-making body between meetings of the World Congress is the International Committee, which

meets normally twice a year. It is elected by the World Congress from representatives of the sections taking account of the need to staff the International's central activities and to achieve the goal of at least 50% women members while not falling below 30%. Sections that do not have members of the Committee can nonetheless be represented by a person with the status of observer. A section may request that the members of its delegation elected by the World Congress be replaced either provisionally or permanently. This replacement must be ratified by the International Committee. The principles for dividing votes among members of delegations are the same as at a World Congress. Elections to leadership bodies are by name and made by secret ballot.

Article 13

The International Committee takes decisions on political and organizational issues by an absolute majority of the votes present when the vote is taken. It decides by a simple majority of those present, without weighting of votes, on procedural issues. It decides by an absolute majority on granting organizations the status of permanent observer, specifying the bodies to which these organizations are permanently invited. It decides on the membership of the Executive Bureau and any other subcommittees, and on the appointment of full-timers - in agreement with the national section of their country - by an absolute majority of the votes present.

Article 14

The Executive Bureau meets between International Committees in order to oversee the implementation of the preceding Committee's decisions and prepare the following Committee. The Executive Bureau is accountable to the International Committee for the decisions it takes. It is not normally empowered to take political decisions; in case of emergency it can consult the sections represented on the International Committee and publish in the International Committee's name any position that receives the approval of an absolute majority of IC members. It cannot make decisions on disciplinary issues, but can nonetheless formulate an opinion, which has an indicative status.

It is mandated to organise the implementation of the decisions of the IC, the good management of the International's practical components (press, education, regional and sectoral co-ordinating bodies), the preparation of meetings of the IC and the work of the International staff.

Article 15

The International Committee is thus responsible, through the structures it designates, for the publication of the official press of the International - if possible in three languages, English, Castilian, French- which will publish the main resolutions and statements of the International and its leading bodies, articles and documents on international events and the life of the sections, and will be a transmission belt for international campaigns. It is responsible in the same way for the publication of an internal bulletin. The International Committee will establish the modalities for the publication of this bulletin in the discussion period preceding a World Congress in order to publish the preparatory documents, the texts submitted to the vote of leadership bodies and discussion articles allowing different points of view to be expressed.

Article 16

The International Committee oversees the financial management of the International through regular reports to its meetings and approval of financial balance sheets and proposed budgets. It will elect an accounts commission from its ranks at each meeting to audit the accounts. Financial management on a day-to-day basis is the responsibility of the Executive Bureau. Dues, fund drives and voluntary donations and income from the sale of our material are the sources of revenue for the International.

Article 17

Anything that is not foreseen in these statutes will be determined by special regulations, which each Congress will be able to revise.

VOTE: 87 - 6 - 3 - 0 CARRIED