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Fifteenth World Congress

Hugo Blanco greets Congress

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A leader of the peasant uprising in the Cuzco region of Peru in the early 1960s, a symbol of the unity and renewal of the Peruvian revolutionary left in 1978-1980, imprisoned, threatened with death, exiled and freed thanks to international solidarity, Hugo Blanco has in the last year faced what for him is a new enemy - illness. A campaign of solidarity ensured that he was adequately cared for and has once again escaped death. He spoke at the 15th World Congress of the Fourth International and we reproduce his intervention below.

[<https://www.internationalviewpoint.org/IMG/jpg/35hb.jpg>]

"Comrades, I will begin with a self-criticism. At various times, when my life was threatened by repression, I was confident because I could count on the support of national and international solidarity. This confidence was justified - on several occasions this solidarity saved my life. Finally, when it was not the direct action of repression that threatened my life, but illness, I felt helpless and did not expect any kind of solidarity. And yet it came to my aid, beginning with those close to me, with friends who were geographically the least distant, it extended across my country and abroad. It reached a level and an effectiveness that I would never have imagined.

My self-criticism relates to this; if I had not expected solidarity, it was because I did not conceive solidarity as manifesting itself when it is not a question of repression that is at stake. And it is undoubtedly one of the most important lessons of life that old age has taught me.

Solidarity emerged and grew in all its aspects, beginning with the economic aspect, that allowed me to go to the capital of my country, to pay for the medication, the examinations, the surgeons I needed. The influence of various comrades meant that I could be operated on in Mexico and that, benefiting from Cuban solidarity, I was able to have exhaustive examinations in that country. And the moral force that I gained from the manifestation of sympathy from comrades from different countries was no small thing. Thanks to this solidarity, I conquered my illness and I am in good health. Naturally, as the comrades remind me, I am no longer 20 years old but nearer 70 and I cannot count on my body as I could. I can no longer run in the Andes according to my custom.

On this occasion, like others when solidarity has saved my life, the Fourth International has played a central role. And it is all the more important for me to be able to salute this congress, held in new international conditions of resistance to the attack of the multinationals against all sectors of oppressed humanity. I want to talk about one of these sectors, from which I originate and inside of which I continue to work - the indigenous movement of the Americas. It has shaken various parts of the continent: Chiapas, Ecuador, Bolivia with great force; but it is also equally significant in Peru, Guatemala, Chile, the USA, Canada and nearly all the countries of the continent. Against neoliberal individualism, it asserts its age old collectivism. Faced with racism, of which it is a victim, it does not respond with an inverse racism, but with its will for integration. The indigenous Ecuadorians have led the overthrow of two governments by appealing to all the people to join the struggle; it is also what the Bolivian cocaleros did, like the peoples of Chiapas with their cry "No more a Mexico without us!"

To end I would like to stress that my generation and the preceding generations have struggled for a world of equality. You, those of the new generations, you struggle not only for that, but for the survival of the human species, because the big multinationals have brought about an ecological disaster which endangers, among other things, our species. The destruction of nature in a world ruled by them is so rapid that I do not believe that, if it remains subject to this system, humanity could survive another hundred years. Your struggle is, then, fundamentally a struggle so that humanity can pursue its existence."