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Uruguay

Proposal to defeat hunger

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More than 200,000 Uruguayans unemployed; 700,000 in precarious employment; 25% of the population in poverty; undernourished children who 'feed' on refuse and grass; 200,000 Uruguayans living in temporary housing; wages and pensions reduced in value by 40%; thousand of young people thrown into economic exile; small savers robbed; thousands of millions of dollars thrown into the pockets of speculators and the payment of the fraudulent foreign debt; a programmed assault on state owned banks and companies.

[https://npa31.org/IMG/jpg/24_Uruguay_02.jpg]

This attack on the people and its standard of living is brutal, this attack is repeated in the next budget and the Letter of intent signed with the IMF.

Thousands of compatriots in the most unheard-of misery and enduring hunger.

This is the obscene balance sheet of the neo-liberal coalition headed by Jorge Batlle and his partners of the Partido Colorado and Partido Nacional.

For these reasons, the Corriente de Izquierda reaffirms its proposal for: National Elections Now; Let the People Decide; Batlle and the IMF out of the government. Because it is irresponsible to allow this government to continue destroying the country until 2005. For a government of the Frente Amplio and the workers.

But hunger does not brook any delay, nor does it conform to any political timetable.

There is no historical antecedent for a crisis like the present one, nor of massive famine in the country. In a country characterized by food production, this famine is unacceptable from any point of view. The Uruguayan Famine does not result from a lack of food, but from a perverse distribution of the goods that are produced.

Uruguay does not need the 'aid' of the very international financial organisms that promoted this social disaster.

We should start by ending the export of meat, rice and milk products and supplying the impoverished population deprived of all basic human rights.

The food that the country produces is exported to enrich the multinationals and local capitalists associated with them, the bankers and speculators, and to pay the illegitimate foreign debt, without any consideration for the needs of the people. It is necessary to end this plundering of the wealth of the country.

It is fundamental that we have an emergency programme for this national crisis, that mobilizes organized social solidarity. But, above all, that uses the existing natural and food resources without waiting for this government to respond to our needs.

During the 1958 floods, when the country suffered a natural catastrophe, a series of measures were applied that can be taken as an example. There were thousands of homeless who had to take shelter and be fed and there was a national mobilization donating foods, clothes, bedding, medicines. There was also a great movement of volunteers who classified foods, packed them, loaded and unloaded them onto transport. The trade unions and student

associations organized solidarity.

The gravity of the present moment demands an equivalent mobilization and solidarity.

In order to make a reality the Social Front that social organizations like FUCVAM have set up.

In order to impel a Law of Popular Initiative where it is the people, directly, that legislates and decides on its social, economic, political necessities.

In order to organize the people, so that is not deceived by the hypocritical manipulation of the government and the political right, nor by the industrialists of 'communal property'.

National Coordination Against Hunger

The situation can be defined as one of social catastrophe and national emergency in the face of famine.

In this sense, the PIT-CNT, FUCVAM, FEUU, SERPAJ, UTD, Intersocial, the neighbourhood movements, movements for human rights, of women, young people, committed intellectuals, community radios, popular soup kitchens, NGOs that defend basic social rights and the political organizations of the left, beginning with the Frente Amplio and its rank and file committees, should take the initiative, organizing a National Coordination Against Hunger.

1 To supply food for meals for children and for the popular soup kitchens;

2 To impel the creation of new popular restaurants, in the districts condemned to the misery and exclusion, and to help the collective organization of people, without confusing this basic social and humanitarian task, with 'social assistance';

3 To guarantee solidarity with the unemployed, with the popular struggles, and the centres of work and study under occupation;

4 To reject all repression, trials and imprisonment of the victims of a capitalist economic system that only produces misery and unemployment, and criminalizes the legitimate protest of the poor and excluded.

Emergency Measures

A great national campaign against hunger, of food collections among the population with storage points throughout the country to mobilize social solidarity, demands of immediate emergency measures that are perfectly viable and applicable. What is needed is:

1 The immediate elimination of the tax on the wages and pensions of the workers;

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- 2 An immediate increase in wages and pensions according to the index of inflation, taking the minimum to \$6,000.
- 3 The freezing and control of prices, rents, and tariffs in the public services;
- 4 The elimination of VAT for the products of the family shopping basket, lighting, water, gas, telephones;
- 5 The suspension of cuts in 'essential services' (lighting, water, gas, telephone) and the suspension of the payment for those services where the head of the family is unemployed;
- 6 A ban on layoffs;
- 7 The immediate suspension of evictions;
- 8 Free collective transport for evicted families;
- 9 That the big supermarket chains, commercial enterprises and restaurants contribute a daily amount of food according to their market share to canteens for children and popular soup kitchens;
- 10 To demand that the refrigerators do not export meat until the hunger situation has been dealt with and that they supply a daily quota to the canteens for children and popular soup kitchens;
- 11 To demand that the Sanguinetti, Manini, and Saman groups and the other exporters of rice make a daily contribution to the canteens for children and popular soup kitchens;
- 12 To demand that Conaprole, Parmalat, and other companies donate the milk that the children of the poorest districts need. Each company a percentage in proportion to its market share;
- 13 To apply to the AFAPs and to the private banks a tax on their profits for the purchase of food, clothes, and medicines;
- 14 Distribution of all State lands for food production under the guidance of the faculty of Agronomy; distribution of the lands of the large indebted estate owners;
- 15 Reduction by 50% of the pay of the president of the Republic, ministers, administrators, senators, deputies, diplomatic personnel and high officials of the Armed Forces and the Police and the turning over of these resources for the purchase of food, clothes, and medicines.

The crisis does not have to be paid for by the working people

The neoliberal coalition government of blancos and colorados, the IMF, the World Bank, the multinationals and their capitalist partners, have generated this situation of social crisis, unemployment, misery and poverty. And they are prepared for more of the worst with the scandalous law to bail out the bankers and financial speculators.

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Therefore, the only correct course is that the capitalists and imperialism pay the costs of a socio-economic crisis that mortgages the future of the country and its people.

It is necessary to stop immediately the drainage of wealth.