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Fourth International

Puerto Rican contribution on the Role and Tasks discussion

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Contribution from the Fourth International Caucus in the Movimiento al Socialismo (Puerto Rico)

Basing ourselves on our experience, we support the orientation toward the creation of broad anti-capitalist parties. Such parties can be a fundamental link in the road to the creation of the revolutionary parties mentioned in the statutes of the Fourth International, adopted in the 2003 Congress. We similarly support the 10 points included in the fourth point of the resolution as programmatic orientations that we should push for in the process of creation of anti-capitalist parties. It seems to us, nevertheless, that to call these parties anti-capitalist and not revolutionary is not a mere terminological quirk: one thing is not the same as the other. It is not a question of raising a wall between them. The importance of anti-capitalist parties lies precisely in the possibility, in their potential, to evolve in an increasingly clear, explicit and conscious revolutionary direction. Nevertheless, such an evolution, not even the adoption of the 10 points outlined in the resolution, much less a practice oriented by them, is assured beforehand. We cannot simply suppose that broad anti-capitalist parties, made up of "left reformists" and "revolutionary nationalists", will spontaneously flow in that direction. For that, a constant, systematic, and, thus organized intervention of those favoring that evolution is necessary. From this follows the need for an organization of those favoring that orientation within the broad anti-capitalist parties that may emerge. It seems to us that the resolution mentions but does not emphasize sufficiently the need for this organization.

The notion of anti-capitalist parties seems important to us, but not only in the context indicated in the resolution, defined by the evolution of social-democracy toward social-liberalism, on the one hand, and the presence of working-class and social resistance, on the other. It can also have an important role in attracting to a revolutionary position sectors which are beginning to perceive the need of a break with capitalism but that, for different reasons (including the image of socialism projected by Stalinism in all its variants or by diverse sectarian currents, etc) are not yet willing to call themselves or do not yet think of themselves as socialist or communist. This is the case in our country, where there is no significant social-democratic tendency.

In that sense, the term "socialism of the XXIst century" is both legitimate and useful: it creates a space that invites a break with the tendencies that dominated socialism in the XX century, namely, social-democracy and Stalinism. It allows us to present the need for something different from those two currents as a central aspect of any present and future socialist project. It is, therefore, positive that Chávez and others have popularized this notion of "socialism of the XXIst century". It is an opportunity that we must take advantage of. We feel until now we have not done so sufficiently. It would be hard to think of a world current that is not the Fourth International that has thought-out, debated and elaborated more well-rounded positions regarding alternatives to social-democracy and Stalinism, that is to say, that is better equipped to intervene in the debates on the characteristics of a socialism of the XXIst century: think, for example, of our positions on socialist democracy, women's struggles, LGBTTT struggles, the ecological question, and now, climatic change, among others. It seems to us that a more visible and active intervention in the ongoing debate about a socialism of the XXIst century should part of the role and tasks of the Fourth International in the coming period. We need documents, articles, books, pamphlets, etc. which make are documents and elaborations available as contributions to that renewal of the socialist project.

We agree with the indication that in the near future the combination of the right-ward evolution of social-democracy, on the one hand, and social resistances, on the other, can promote the emergence not only of the type of broad anti-capitalist party that we promote, but also of diverse hybrid formations, nurtured by the discontent or rejection of the complete adaptation to neo-liberalism of the existing parties. This is also the case in the contexts where there is no significant social-democratic party. Besides social-democracy and broad anti-capitalist parties there may also appear very diverse formations that may or may not become anti-capitalist parties, or may open the path for the

emergence of such parties, but which are not that type of party. How should we classify, for example, a structure such as the PSUV in Venezuela? In so far as such formations emerge it may be convenient for the struggle to create broad anti-capitalist parties both that our current work within such parties or remain independent of them. Everything will depend on the specific situation in each country. In other words, we see no contradiction between adopting an orientation toward the creation of broad anti-capitalist parties, on the one hand, and the recognition, on the other, that in the immediate future formations that we cannot describe as such may also emerge, and in which it may also be necessary to actively intervene. To fight within those organizations for the 10 points indicated in the resolution may the form of working for the creation of broad anti-capitalist parties at this moment and in certain countries. It seems to us that the resolution should encompass the possibility of these variants.

Furthermore, the orientation to the creation of broad anti-capitalist parties does not annul the possibility of processes of regroupment between revolutionary organizations. In Puerto Rico, the section of the Fourth International has recently joined other groups in such a process. The result has been the emergence of the Movimiento al Socialismo, a modest structure, which is nevertheless quantitatively and qualitatively superior to that which existed before. But it is not a broad anti-capitalist party, but rather, a regroupment of Marxist sectors (with the exception of our section, not originating from "trotskyism"). To recognize the possibility and desirability of taking advantage of such opportunities is not in contradiction with the perspective of creating broad anti-capitalist parties. On the contrary, we think they should be combined: one of the topics to be discussed with other organizations is precisely their position regarding the creation of that type of broad anti-capitalist party. In our case, one of the points of agreement of our unification was the shared perspective of the creation of a broad workers' party (or party of labor and the communities, or party of working people: the name is under discussion). Thus, it seems to us that the resolution which states our orientation toward the creation of broad anti-capitalist parties can and should include the desirability of taking advantage of the possibilities of regroupment with other revolutionary organizations.

We agree that we must pose the need for an international organization within the broad anti-capitalist parties that may emerge. We also agree with the appreciation that a new international structure composed of such parties is not something that will emerge in the near future, or, at least, whose emergence will coincide with the creation of such parties in specific countries. Furthermore, even if such a structure were to emerge, the intervention of those that favor the evolution of its components in a revolutionary direction will require an international coordination. In other words: a) the need for the groups of the Fourth International to act as such within the broad anti-capitalist parties, b) the need to promote international links among such parties, c) the desirability that our sections active in different anti-capitalist parties coordinate their efforts, including if the latter do manage to coalesce into some form of new international and d) the probability that for the time being such parties will not create such an international, are all reasons that lead to the conclusion, clearly indicated in the resolution, of strengthening the Fourth International as the only structure of its type in the world.

We agree with the amendments presented to include in the resolution aspects related to women's and LGBTTT struggles and to promote our youth work.

We also support the indications that we should avoid the language associated with official publications (emergent capitalist countries) or of discarding "the old" to build the new to the extent that this refers to persons (beyond the fact that an absolute opposition between old and new is not very dialectical, to say the least: from where can the new emerge if not from a present which is constantly turning into the past?) On the other hand, we do not agree with the use of the term "empowerment" of the dispossessed, oppressed, etc. We feel terms such as self-organization are more adequate. The term empowerment, at least among us, is associated not only with self-organization but also with the notion that with that organization and the self-confidence it generates (which of course we fully aspire to), the oppressed can progressively conquer "portions" of power, thus avoiding the need for political action or defying the capitalist state, that is to say, a perspective which is not at all interested in posing the problem of revolution.