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Fourth International congress discussion

SAP Denmark Amendment to "Role and Tasks"

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Proposed by the SAP, Danish section, adopted by the Preparatory Convention of SAP.

The following amendment should be inserted almost at the end of section 3, after "...they are doomed to have contradictions and divisions because of their reformist nature."

In spite of the evolution within the traditional social democratic parties from classical reformism to social liberalism and in spite of the weakening of these parties, reformism still exists within the working class and reformist political parties still play a decisive role in Europe.

For revolutionaries and anticapitalists reformism is and will in the foreseeable future remain a political challenge and a political opponent.

First, most classical social democracies have kept some form of ideological and organisational bonds to the working class and to the trade unions. This is why we cannot rule out that they will turn tactically to the left or propose and even implement limited reforms benefitting the working class or marginalised groups. The recent class rhetoric from Gordon Brown towards the Conservatives can prove to be a step in this direction.

Secondly, we can state the fact that in many countries reformist parties actually exist or are being formed. In Sweden, Norway and Denmark these parties – Vänsterpartiet (VP), Socialistisk Venstreparti (SV) and Socialistisk Folkeparti (SF) respectively – have a long history. In Denmark SF has distinctively grown stronger in the last few years, and in total gained more supporters than the established social democratic party has lost. In France the Left Party in alliance with the CP gained more votes than the NPA in the European elections. In Germany Die Linke is a similar example.

Even in well established broad anticapitalist parties we face the risk that reformist currents will develop and grow stronger.

As long as the working class in each country and in recent times is lacking experience with the reformist parties in practice – ie. in government – rising dissatisfaction will often lead to greater support for these parties.

The working class will at first try to use them for self defence and for change. For revolutionaries and anticapitalists it is not feasible to change the balance of forces and grow decisively and qualitatively until the reformist currents have proven in practice that they will rather defend capitalism than the working class.

This faces revolutionary and anticapitalist forces with important tasks and tactical choices. Under all circumstances it is necessary to develop a political alternative to the reformist currents – an alternative that clearly supersedes the established system.

Dependent on the concrete circumstances in each country revolutionaries can try to build left wings within the left reformist parties that are most open and has the strongest relations to social movements and mobilisations. In other countries the task is to build broader parties on a clearly anticapitalist platform and with a united front tactical offensive towards the reformist parties.

Finally there will be countries where sections of the Fourth International must fill this part because it is not practically possible to establish broad anticapitalist parties.

In replacement of the last three lines of section 3 and as an introduction to section 4:

"In conclusion, the situation in the working class movement has the following characteristics:

- The trade unions are weakened – in some countries decisively
- The traditional social democratic parties are quantitatively weakened
- The traditional social democratic parties have moved away from classical reformism and towards social liberalism
- In many countries the reformist currents are represented by several different parties
- Some countries have seen the development of important anticapitalist organisations and currents

This situation faces revolutionaries and anticapitalists with new openings but also a new task: Reorganising and rebuilding the working class movement on a new anticapitalist and ecological platform

[The whole of section 4 follows from here without any amendments]