

Greetings from the ICFI to the SEP (US) 2022 Congress

New revolutionary epoch opens doors for building the ICFI in Brazil

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These remarks were delivered by Tomas Castanheira to the Seventh National Congress of the Socialist Equality Party (US), held from July 31 to August 5, 2022.

Castanheira is a leading member of the Socialist Equality Group in Brazil, which is in political solidarity with the International Committee of the Fourth International.

Read the full report on the Congress and the resolutions adopted at it.

It is with great honor that I address this Congress in the name of the Socialist Equality Group in Brazil.

In his remarks to the Third National Congress of the Socialist Equality Party (Sri Lanka), comrade David North stressed its similarities to the April 1917 Congress of the Bolshevik Party, in which Lenin fought to orient the party to lead the working class to the assumption of political power.

This political content was expressed in the document, “For a Democratic and Socialist Congress of Workers and Rural Masses in Sri Lanka!”, the last written under the direct guidance of comrade Wije Dias. Drawing from the fundamental lessons of the October Revolution and the long struggle of Trotskyism against the betrayals Stalinism and Pabloism, it poses the fundamental challenge to the working class of overcoming the spontaneous stage of its insurrection by building its organs of power—the soviets—and its conscious revolutionary leadership—the ICFI.

The problems addressed by the SEP in Sri Lanka, however, are not circumscribed to their national reality. The revolutionary crisis developing in the island is, in fact, an acute manifestation of the character of the new revolutionary epoch that the ICFI has clearly recognized and in which it is destined to play the leading role.

In this critical stage of crisis of the global capitalist system, the 7th Congress of the SEP US, will prove to be a milestone. From the epicenter of the global crisis, from where the imperialist bourgeoisie is launching world war and international reaction, the Trotskyist party is issuing a powerful call to mobilize the American working class as part

of an international upheaval against capitalism.

The resolutions being discussed here are of enormous importance. They provide synthetical and yet profound analyses and perspectives of the major questions of war, the pandemic, the developing class struggle and political crisis. The world socialist revolution emerges as the necessary outcome of each one of these aspects of the present reality.

As this Congress dedicates itself to discussing the importance of the subjective factor in the development of the objective revolutionary conditions, it must recognize in the ability of the cadre to produce, assimilate, and fight for these ideas a critical development in itself.

The challenge posed by the 2019 Summer School—that the party raise its theoretical level to meet the intensifying political challenges—is being remarkably met. As comrade North stated then, it required the “interaction of an intense engagement with contemporary developments and the identification and critical analysis of the historical processes that constitute the essential content of the ‘present’.”

I should point out that the analysis worked out by the ICFI of the interaction between the biological, sociological, and political factors in the development of the COVID-19 pandemic represents the only truly scientific understanding of this crisis and a major achievement in the field of dialectical materialism.

Will Lehman’s campaign to the UAW proves unequivocally that these theoretical gains belong to the working class. It proves, moreover, that a factory worker won to the perspective of Trotskyism is capable, as we would say in Portuguese, “*de provocar um estrago*”—that is, to cause a massive blow—in the industrial police apparatus cultivated by the most powerful bourgeoisie in the world. The Democrats think that they can win a two-front war against Russia and China, but they have just lost a critical battle to the Socialist Equality Party in their domestic war.

The most important characteristic of this campaign is that it aims not just at the destruction of the bureaucracy within

the US, but the building of the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees.

This program finds enormous resonance in the Brazilian working class. The Metalworkers Union of the ABC, for instance, from where emerged Lula, the puppet of the Brazilian bourgeoisie, is a criminal organization with direct connections to the UAW, responsible for overseeing the destruction of tens of thousands of jobs and closure of several plants in recent years.

The explosive development of the working class movement in Brazil and throughout Latin America since the crisis of the bourgeois nationalist wave of the Pink Tide—disastrous result of the counterrevolutionary policies of the Pabloites—is opening immense possibilities for the construction of the ICFI.

The deep collaboration in which we have been engaged with the international comrades in the recent years has permitted us to elaborate strong political perspectives in response to the major developments of the growing political crisis in Brazil.

In this process, we have advanced our relationship to the most progressive layers of scientists to fight against the barbaric policies in response to the pandemic; we advanced the only true opposition to the reactionary pro-capitalist policies of the trade unions unanimously supported by the pseudo-left; we entered in contact with a vanguard of workers who initiated wildcat strikes and opposed the bureaucratic maneuvers of their unions to sabotage their strikes; and we accessed deeper layers of the working class, ignored by unions and by any other political organization. And I should say we are receiving an increasing number of contacts from all across the country.

We stand as the single organization that opposes the right-wing turn of the political system in Brazil with a truly Marxist orientation. I would like to bring to your attention some critical differences in our response to the national political crisis in relation to all sections of the pseudo-left.

As was critically pointed out in a recent discussion, the collapse of democratic forms of rule is an international phenomenon stemming from the mortal crisis of global capitalism. It is now unanimously recognized in the press that Jair Bolsonaro, with the aid of the military, has put in motion a reenacted version of Trump's January 6 coup in Brazil.

The attitude of the pseudo-left to Trump's coup—that is, to dismiss it as not even being an actual coup, as being an event with no meaningfully historical impact—serves as their basis to dismiss the dictatorial threats in Brazil. The strength of American imperialism and its commitment to international democracy, in fact, is in their opinion the fundamental factor preventing a coup here. What fools! What criminals!

It is not a coincidence that these forces are the strongest supporters of the NATO war against Russia.

To make it clear, our position is not that a far-right military conspiracy will succeed, but that the working class is the force that must stop it. Not the spineless bourgeoisie, not the generals, not the imperialists.

Comrades, the ICFI is clearly destined to lead the working class in Brazil and in Latin America. But we have a fundamental struggle to wage for the political clarification of the working class against all the forms of political deviations that have been systematically planted in this region of the world.

The importance of the political advances in Sri Lanka for the development of the ICFI as a whole has already been pointed out in this congress. The historical struggle of our comrades in Sri Lanka for the program of Permanent Revolution, particularly opposing Maoism, Castroism and every form of bourgeois nationalism, is a critical inspiration for our efforts to build a section in Brazil. But this was only possible in Sri Lanka—as it is for Latin America—because this perspective considers the revolutionary character of the working class in the imperialist countries, particularly of the American working class. The attack against this perspective was one of the most vicious betrayals committed by Pabloism.

While it would be a crime to propose that the proletariat in the backward countries wait for the working class in the imperialist ones before it takes power, we cannot develop a revolutionary perspective in such countries without the fundamental collaboration of the international working class to overthrow—and not isolate from—imperialism.

Comrades, I would like to end my remarks by saluting the Congress again and saying that your fight to build the SEP in the United States will be seen by the international working class as a critical step towards their own emancipation.



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