

## LIFE OF THE PARTY: GENERAL MEETING OF AUGUST 2024

During the second week of August a **general meeting of the Party** was held, with the participation of militants and sympathizers from Venezuela, Chile, Spain and Italy. The focus of the general meeting was to study the development from the origins of the *Sinistra*, passing through its struggle against the degeneration of the CI, the split of 1952 (true reconstitution of the Party on solid Marxist bases), the struggle that gave rise to the body of Theses of 1965-66, the tactical errors that followed in the labor union question and the lurch that followed and that gave rise to the degenerative process of the direction of the Party between 1972 and 1982 known as the *new course*. A complete version of the written reports that were read and commented in the meeting will be published in the Party's press, in the next issues, without prejudice to the small extracts of quotes that are synthetically reproduced in this summary.

Sunday of the previous week was the date of arrival of most of the comrades at the meeting site and was dedicated to general logistical matters.

The **first session** (morning of the first day) focused on the plan of the meeting and began the study of the selection of writings of the Left (1912-1917) extracted from the material associated with the first volume of the History of the Left.

It was continued in the **second session** (afternoon of the first day) with the study of the struggle against the degeneration of the International, using the extended timeline which was prepared at the August 2023 general meeting and which is being published in the Party press (see "The Internationalist Proletarian" no.12 and page 2 of this very issue).

The **third session** (morning of the second day) was devoted to the authentic reconstitution of the Party in 1952 and to the reasons that led to the break with the democratic-activist deviation that defended, among other things, the participation in parliamentary elections, the democratic mechanism within the Party, the freedom of theoretical innovation, the negation of labor union action, the rejection of the slogan of anonymity, the theory of the gradual decadence of capitalism and of a supposed new ruling class in Russia (the bureaucracy). The study, the full report of which will be published in the Party press, was carried out with correlation to the material published in *Battaglia Comunista* which at that time was the Party's review. In that same session one of the texts on which the Party based its activity from then on was studied, the summary of the Rome Meeting of 1951, entitled "*Theory and Action in the Marxist Doctrine*".

The **fourth session** (afternoon of the second day) was devoted to a general work session in which the distribution of tasks among those attending the meeting was organized; tasks related to the digitization of the archive, preparation of the bourgeois press review session, preparation and translation of articles, preparation of stands for propaganda at demonstrations, preparation of books for publication, preparation of self-published material for the meeting readings, completion of certain sections of the web, etc. Similar sessions were repeated at the end of the reading parts of the fifth, sixth and seventh sessions.

The **fifth session** (morning of the third day) was devoted to an exposition of the data of the capitalist economy and the collection of bourgeois press that is carried out at the international level, by several comrades who coordinate themselves for this task: "*The party today carries out a work of scientific recording of the social phenomena, in order to confirm*

*the fundamental theses of Marxism. It analyzes, confronts and comments on recent and contemporary facts. It repudiates the doctrinaire elaboration that tends to found new theories or to demonstrate the insufficiency of the doctrine in the explanation of the phenomena.*" (Characteristic Thesis, 1951).

The **sixth session** (afternoon of the third day) took place partly outside the Party's meeting place insofar as we participated in a labor union assembly in which the comrades from Venezuela and Chile explained the development of their labor union activity. This explanation – which gave rise to a conversation of clarification among the attendees – was carried out as part of the development of that assembly itself, in which the union situations and the distribution of tasks were exposed and valued as it is done weekly in order to orientate them. This session ended with the viewing of the video-documentary "*Alternative to the mercantile-capitalist system*", which was attended by militants, sympathizers and contacts.

The **seventh and eighth sessions** (morning and afternoon of the fourth day) were entirely dedicated to the study through reading and commentary of the *Characteristic Theses* (1951). The Theses, after recalling the program of Livorno, establish the tasks of the Party in continuity with those enunciated in the Theses of Lyon (1926): "*Equally necessary tasks of the Party – before, during, and after the armed struggle for the seizure of power – are the defense and dissemination of the theory of the movement, the defense and strengthening of the internal organization with proselytism and propaganda of the communist theory and program, and the constant activity in the ranks of the proletariat wherever it is impelled, by economic needs and determinations, to the struggle for its interests.*" (Characteristic Theses, 1951). The Theses provide, together with the text studied in the third session, a sure guide in the labor union tactics of the Party (focused taking into account the process of labor union integration initiated by fascism and maintained after the Second World War), they reaffirm the anti-personalist position of the Party ("*political activity, exempt to the maximum of careerism and praise of individuals*") and its anti-revisionist position: "*The development of capitalism from its birth until today has confirmed and confirms the theorems of Marxism, such as they are enunciated in the texts, and all pretended 'innovation' or 'teaching' of these last 30 years only confirms that capitalism still lives and must be brought down. The central point, therefore, of the present doctrinal position of the movement is this one: no revision of the original principles of the proletarian revolution*" (Characteristic Theses, 1951).

The Theses study in depth the three waves of opportunist degeneration (social-democratic revisionism, bankruptcy of the Second International, the degeneration of the CI and its product: Stalinism), extracting the tactical and organizational lessons from them, and reaffirming: "*To accelerate the new class ascent there are no ready-made recipes. To make the proletarians hear the class voice there are no maneuvers and expedients, which as such would not make the party appear as it really is, but a disfigurement of its function, to the detriment and damage of the effective resumption of the revolutionary movement, which is based on the real maturity of the facts and the corresponding adjustment of the party, enabled for this only by its doctrinal and political inflexibility*" (Characteristic Theses, 1951).

The **ninth session** (morning of the fifth day), was dedicated to the introduction to the body of Theses of 1965-66 with detailed explanation of the two deviations against which the

*Considerations on the organic activity of the party when the general situation is historically unfavorable* (1965), the *Theses on the historical task, the action and structure of the world communist party, according to the positions that for more than half a century form the historical heritage of the communist left* (Theses of Naples, 1965) and the *Supplementary Theses on the historical task, action and structure of the world communist party* (Theses of Milan, 1966) are directed. That is, on the one hand, against the activist-democratic deviation that gave rise to the current "*Rivoluzione comunista*" in 1964 and, on the other hand, against the mystical-humanistoid deviation that would give rise to "*Invariance*" (1967) and whose foundational text is *Origin and function of the Party form*.

During this session, the *Considerations on the organic activity of the party when the general situation is historically unfavorable* (1965) was read, which after describing the harshness of the unfavorable situation, then reaffirms that "*we claim, therefore, all forms of activity proper to favorable moments, insofar as the real relations of force allow it*" and that "*no current militant can infer the right to a choice: to have the papers in order with the 'Historical Party' and to disengage from the formal party*".

The **tenth session** (afternoon of the fifth day) was devoted to the reading and commentary of the *Theses on the historical task, action and structure of the world communist party, according to the positions that for more than half a century have formed the historical heritage of the communist left* (1965), known as the *Theses of Naples*.

The Theses fight simultaneously against the democratic mystification and against the idealist-humanistoid mystification. By way of example, in the 7th point, after vindicating dialectical materialism and economic determinism, the overcoming of the democratic mechanism is vindicated: "*the road to travel was only that which in the historical process would have freed us more and more from the lethal democratic mechanism, not only in society, and in the various bodies that are organized within it, but within the revolutionary class itself and, above all, in its political party*" and immediately afterwards a dart is thrown against the attempt to approach this result from a mystical-humanistoid point of view: "*This aspiration of the Left – which cannot be traced back to a miraculous intuition or to a rational enlightenment of thinkers, but which has been reached in the effects of a chain of real, violent, bloody and merciless struggles even when they have closed with the defeat of the revolutionary forces – has its historical traces in the whole series of manifestations of the Left.*" It is reiterated against both deviations that the positions of the Party do not come from "*discoveries of useless geniuses or solemn resolutions of 'sovereign' congresses*".

The Theses clarify the confusion generated by the authors of *Origin and function* around the German word *Gemeinwesen*, putting the question of the State in its place: "*The theoretical question after Lenin has no need of further clarification (...) the revolutionary dictatorship is a true State provided with armed forces, repressive police and a justice in political and terrorist forms that does not tie its hands with juridical deceptions (...)*".

The Theses also recall that "*The first truth that mankind will be able to conquer is the notion of the future communist society*" and that this knowledge is in the program of the proletarian revolution, mostly in the negative sense "*the future society, which we know well, insofar as we have individualized and woven well the ganglia of the odious present society which the revolution will have to destroy*", but they categorically warn that "*such developments cannot be employed to explain how*

*gradually the way of life of the party free of opportunism is affirmed, which is contained in organic centralism and cannot arise from a 'revelation'.*"

The Theses also stress that "*within the party, it is possible to tend to bring to life a fiercely anti-bourgeois atmosphere, which broadly anticipates the characteristics of a communist society*" also recalling that "*the party is at the same time a factor and a product of the historical development of the situations, and can never be considered as a strange and abstract element that can dominate the surrounding environment, without falling into a new and more regrettable utopianism*" and that our aspiration "*cannot be reduced to consider the ideal party as a phalanstery surrounded by impregnable walls*".

The Theses of Naples end as follows: "*The party perseveres in carving out the outlines of its doctrine, its action and its tactics with a unicity of methods beyond space and time. All those who are uncomfortable with these delineations, have at their disposal the obvious way to leave the ranks of the party (...)* Whoever, seeing the party continue along its clear path, which we have tried to summarize in these theses to be presented at the general meeting in Naples, July 1965, does not yet feel at such a historical height, knows very well that they can take any other direction divergent from ours. We do not have to adopt in the matter any other procedure".

The **eleventh session** (morning of the sixth day) was dedicated to the study of the *Supplementary Theses on the historical task, the action and the structure of the world communist party* (1966), known as *Theses of Milan*, theses that add a series of supplementary points that developed as fundamental characteristics of opportunism "*preferring a shorter way, more comfortable and less arduous, as opposed to that longer, more uncomfortable and bristling with roughness*", "*to unite the worst degeneration of the principles of the party to an ostentatious admiration for the classic texts, for the dictation and the work of great masters and great leaders*"; they reaffirmed that "*in the party there are no contests in which one struggles to reach more or less brilliant or visible positions*" recalling that "*to abuse the formalisms of organization without a vital reason has been and will always be a defect and a suspicious and stupid danger*" as well as they reaffirmed our anti-personalist position of always and the determination of the Party to: "*free itself forever from the traitorous thrust that seemed to emanate from illustrious men, and from the despicable function of manufacturing, in order to achieve its objectives and its victories, a stupid notoriety and publicity for other personal names*".

Without prejudice to remembering that the fundamental materials are the materials published as such and that the historical correspondence between comrades has a complementary character, the study was recapitulated with the reading of a letter from 1952 and another from 1964 that contain suggestive expressions that later found their final wording in the Theses studied.

Regarding the prohibition of new theoretical elaboration:

- "*(...) after having clarified a hundred times what is the sense of the theoretical work of the party, fundamental, incessant, collective, but not intellectual and personal, individual militants are FORBIDDEN to find facts that contradict the theory we have possessed for a century. Let the enemies do this work.*

*Our theory is a class weapon and not an explanation of the charlatanism of the race to man's True Thought. It is integrally forged to serve a whole historical epoch, a class cycle.*

To 9,999 out of ten thousand militants it does not correspond to add anything or even to verify anything, but to spread the common canons and results. No one should have the ambition to elaborate from new data new chapters and worse corrections to verses of the old ones.

We see how comrades of the great caliber of Engels, Lenin, Trotsky have dedicated long and patient redactions to repeat and re-expose the original doctrine discarding any right of other bourgeois and opportunist seekers to counterpose new historical economic data, we cannot admit that some lactantoid of 20 or 80 years old pretends to discover something new." (Letter of 1952).

- "Precisely because we are not priests of the august truth, but dialectical Marxists (...). Today we must bring down this peripatetic intellectualism which is one of the obvious symptoms of the general anti-revolutionary and opportunist situation. Not being able to dose the tightening to the milligram, tighten mercilessly rather than run the risk of loosening." (Letter of 1952).

Regarding the need for the development of the network of labor union struggle and the Party's influence on it:

- "We must tend to reach the general economic labor union network: otherwise nothing, not even the distant future affirmation of the party nor any revolutionary probability. (...) The struggle is the means, the network is the end, an end mediated to reach the conditions in which the most exquisite political network comes into action." (Letter of 1952).
- "The autonomy of which I speak is formal, statutory, bureaucratic in the sense that it is enshrined in written statutes. It falls if in these it is said: 'the organized goes to mass on Sundays, or subordinates its interests to national production and to the power of the fatherland'. It does not fall if the statute says crudely: 'every wage earner is admitted to the union'. And especially if the workers believe it so and if they are there en masse, not elsewhere." (Letter of 1952).

With regard to the fight against personalism and the vindication of the unrenounceable centralism:

- "It is true that the party is not homogeneous if we have to resort to admiration for the great X to keep it together. On the assumption that he is a brilliant leader, it is precisely without a brilliant leader that the party must function as we have always conceived it. (...) So enough of names and myths made of names. It is therefore regrettable that the comrades are not educated to understand that it is not a decent argument to say: 'X thinks like this'." (Letter of 1964).
- "The other evil is that discipline to the center is conditioned by the opinions or esteem of the individual colleague for the person responsible of the center. If the center is Z or Tom, Dick or Harry, you don't obey when you think Z is cool, you obey and that's it. This is centralism. And Vladimir's one weighed a ton if mine weighs a gram, rest assured. Apart from this there is nothing but clowning around and the belief that the party is a kind of literary contest with prizes." (Letter of 1964).

It was also recalled that for us our discipline has a limit, outside of which it loses all sense, as recalled in the Theses of Naples (1965): "(...) those international and national centrals

were on the road of deviation and betrayal; according to the theory of the Left, **this is the condition that must take away from them all right to obtain, in the name of a hypocritical discipline, the blind obedience of the base**". ("Theses of Naples," 1965).

This conception of discipline is found in abundant fundamental texts of the Left:

"At the base of the relationship between militant and party there is a commitment; we have of that commitment a conception that, to get rid of the unpleasant contractual term, we can simply define as dialectic. The relationship is double, it constitutes a double flow in opposite directions, from the center to the base and from the base to the center; **if the action directed from the center responds to the good functionality of this dialectic relationship, then the healthy reactions of the base will respond to it.**

The problem, therefore, of the famous discipline consists in placing on the base militants a system of limits that is the intelligent reflection of the **LIMITS placed on the action of the leaders**. We have therefore always maintained that **they MUST NOT HAVE THE FACULTY at important turning points in the political conjuncture TO DISCOVER, INVENT AND UNLEASH PURPORTED NEW PRINCIPLES, NEW FORMULAS, NEW NORMS FOR THE ACTION OF THE PARTY. It is in the history of these SURPRISE BLOWS that the shameful history of the betrayals of OPPORTUNISM is summarized.**" (Force, Violence and Dictatorship in the Class Struggle, 1947).

The **twelfth session** (afternoon of the sixth day) began with the study of the deviation on the labor union plane that developed between 1966 and 1971 in the Party attributing an alleged "class" character of the C.G.I.L. and in the formation of "defense committees of the class labor union" within it starting in 1970. This clashed head-on with the characterization of the C.G.I.L. (with the "i" of Italy, as opposed to the C.G.L. of the 1920s) made by the Party: "it cannot dissimulate that not even the confederation that remains with the social-communists of Nenni and Togliatti is based on class autonomy. It is not a red organization, it is also a tricolor organization **STITCHED ACCORDING TO THE MODEL OF MUSSOLINI.**" (The Labor Union Splits in Italy, 1949).

This deviation was the unfortunate preparation of the turn to the other extreme with which an authentic renunciation of the labor union standpoints of the Party on the labor union question, established in the *Characteristic Theses* (Florence meeting, 1951) and in *Theory and action in the Marxist doctrine* (Rome meeting, 1951), was instituted. In fact, the "Tesine sindacali" (published as "il partito di fronte alla questione sindacale" in "il programma comunista" No.3/1972) contain spontaneist and anti-union positions which imply a revision of the standpoints of the Party and which are at the basis of the later tactical errors.

The remainder of this session was dedicated to the analysis and illustration of the **physiognomy** of the degenerative process that took hold of the direction of the Party from the two centers of the formal organization (in Italy and France) between 1972 and 1982, known as the *new course*, through the reading of the report prepared for its publication in the Party press (see page 20 of this issue of "The Internationalist Proletarian").

The **thirteenth session** (morning of the seventh day) was devoted to the first attempts at international reorganization of the Party by the sections that had opposed this *new course* (through the reading of the article published in issue number 1 of the resumption of the Party review "El Comunista", in May

1983) and the successive serial outbreak and subsequent process of cannibalism between the different currents which had embodied the degeneration of the *new course* and which are currently publishing the reviews "le Prolétaire", "il Comunista" (exCombat) and "il Programma Comunista", using for this purpose the report published in "The Internationalist Proletarian" No. 13.

After the detailed study of the preceding crises, one conclusion becomes neatly clear. In 1952 and 1964 the Party rejected activist deviations. **By 1972-82, the tables had turned and it was activism that was leading the organization and consummating the destruction** of the Party's historic line from within.

In the **fourteenth and fifteenth sessions** the balance of the activity of the Party and the **plan** of activity, a program of work and international coordination until the next general meeting were carried out: "Eliminating all the vestiges of the federalism of the old International, **the international organization must assure the maximum of centralization and discipline.** This process is still developing through the difficulties arising from the different conditions of the various countries and from the traditions of opportunism. This will not be solved effectively by mechanical expedients, but by the realization of an effective unity of method which brings out the common characters of the action of the vanguard groups of the proletariat in the different countries." (Tactics of the Communist International in the draft theses presented by the CP of Italy at the IV World Congress, Moscow 1922).

During the time of development of the meeting as well as through the reports presented in the balance meeting, experiences and evaluations of the activity on the labor union level were exchanged since the general meeting of last August and which has seen the participation and assumption of the organization by Party militants of strikes in teleoperator companies, in various museums and in the cafeteria sector in Spain, as well as in teaching and in the "not required" workers in the basic enterprises of Venezuela.

Since the previous general meeting, in the program of international study sessions we have alternated weekly sessions of review of economic data and monitoring of the bourgeois press with the collective readings that in this period have included: "Anti-Dühring: Third part (Socialism)", completing the

reading of the book begun in the previous period, Preface of the text "Socialism: Utopian and Scientific", "Force, Violence and Dictatorship in Class Struggle" (1947) and "Property and Capital" (1948).

We have also continued with the work of translation and republication of various books of Marxism and of the Left, we have made public stances of the Party, spread in demonstrations and by telematic means, deployed stands with books and reviews on May 1st in different parts of Spain, Italy, Chile and Venezuela.

Since the meeting of last August, Party militants have also been in charge of carrying out Marxist training presentations – which have been held for years within an annual cycle – such as "Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State", "100 Years of the October Revolution", "The Ground Rent", "Development of Capitalism since the Second World War", "March 8 Proletarian Women's Day", "Marxist Theory of Money", "May Days: From the proletarian victory to the defeat at the hands of anti-fascism", "Tendency of the rate of profit to fall", "Defeat of the Chinese proletarian revolution" in different localities, in union locals and with the connection of comrades from Italy, Chile, Venezuela and Nicaragua.

During the course of the meeting, the participants kept with "(...) the more and more firm formation **of the method of work that, through an effort neither brief nor easy, aims – with the irrevocable liquidation of every residue of manias for the maneuvers, the intrigues and the alternate alignments of false political groupings that divorce and pact in chain and that in no circumstance will find us in their way – to reconcile the convinced work of all, none excluded, with the absolute homogeneity of direction and of ideological and political position and the maximum uniformity of terminology, having put for anyone, known and unknown, the sepulchral stone on the old unhealthy right to throw incautiously to the circulation without control, improvised nonsense, fished in disorders of nervous association, when not in the bottom of the bottle.**

**Our work is an organic construction and reconstruction with materials taken from tested and ancient verifications, subjected to the hard test of continuity and cohesion.**" (Report of the Florence Meeting, January 25-26, 1958).



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