

I. Congress of the Humanist International

Report of the Organising Commission

Background and Recommendations

The work carried out for this Congress was realised by a Co-ordinating committee of the activities of the different Humanist Parties in formation. This commission assembled in 1984 in Madrid, Spain. This first meeting was held on May 1 during the culmination of the European campaign against unemployment. At that time, the only current that spoke about Humanism in the sense of political action with an international character was the one represented by these parties. These parties were just beginning to develop and had the difficulties that are common to organisations that are just starting. These first Humanist parties were not based either on guild or student action, nor were they the offspring of other political structures, nor were they organised around leaders originating from political groups. Their beginnings were related to cultural associations concerned with the study of human development and social processes. These initial parties defined proposals of action to spread these basic ideas and encourage the formation of new Humanist parties in different countries based on the following: considering the human being as the central value in all social organisation and rejecting, therefore, all forms of discrimination originating from different types of violence; establishing the principle of choice as the concrete expression of liberty in the political field; uplifting the principle of solidarity in the relations of work (that find expression in co-operative forms of co-management or self-management) and of adopting the methodology of non-violence as the form of political action. In June 1985, a meeting was held in Rio de Janeiro to Co-ordinate the action of several Humanist parties that had already been formed and of others that were in formation. In January 1987, in a meeting held in Bombay, the fulfilment of objectives was examined, and a calendar of actions to be carried out on an international scale was set up. Such was the case of the campaign against Apartheid in South Africa that was launched in October of the same year. Without a doubt there have been numerous regional gatherings that allowed co-ordination and continuation of actions; without a doubt participation in elections in different countries began; without a doubt there was struggle against dictatorial regimes such as Stroessner in Paraguay and Pinochet in Chile.... All of this happened and forms part of the history of the Humanist Party, yet it doesn't allow a complete image of everything that has been carried out. By January of 1988, in Rome it was necessary to implement an international organisation. There, it was agreed to form a co-ordinating committee for the realisation of the first international Humanist congress to be carried out in Florence, Italy in January, 1989.

So, here we are...

This co-ordinating board, upon completing its functions presents the following founding documents to be known by all as:

1. Declaration of Principles
2. Theses of the Humanist Party
3. Basis of Political Action
4. Proposal of incorporation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights
5. Bylaws of the Humanist International.

Furthermore, this co-ordinating committee propose the following RECOMMENDATIONS:

- That the character of the International will not be executive, instead, it will serve the purpose of co-ordinating activities and fostering a greater common intelligence of the member countries that comprise it.

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- That all decision-making power of the International emanates from a General Assembly which retains the power of correcting, rectifying and modifying situations that were unforeseen at their start.
 - That there should exist a function of implementing the decisions of the Assembly called the "General Council" and that the head of this Council will be collegiate and rotating.
 - That there will be internal elections at least every two years in the national Humanist parties.
 - That the International will not attempt to resolve internal situations of conflict within a Humanist party in a country, nor will the International decide a dispute between two Humanist Parties in different countries. Nevertheless, the International can assume the character of a mediator upon request of the parties.
 - That the practice of internal Democracy be adopted, reflected in multiple slates and in the effective participation of minorities beginning with a minimum of 1% of votes obtained in internal elections. The exercise of respect for minorities is based on our concept of the new surpassing the old. Furthermore, it is based on the primacy of the future over actions that are carried out in particular situations; it is based on opening up the probabilities favouring emerging phenomena that can become the orientors of future processes. In sum, it is based on the elemental idea that all that is born, is born small. And this idea is opposed to the practices that accept as valuable what is big just because it is big and what is established because established. For these same reasons, we understand that the sizes of our different parties correspond to the different moments of process of each, what issues are in the environments where they act, and that these facts do not make substantial qualitative differences.

These brief Recommendations we have just enunciated, are accompanied by the documents mentioned above and which we formally deliver to this General Assembly of the First Humanist International.