

I. Congress of the Humanist International

Message of the President

Upon assuming this function to which I have been assigned, I would like to formulate a few reflections. The first is related to the theme of Human Rights.

The International has accepted and considers as one of its founding documents the "Universal Declaration of Human Rights" adopted by the United Nations on December 10, 1948. Since then, to this day numerous violations to the dignity of the human being are constantly taking place everywhere.

Human rights do not have the desired universal scope because they do not depend on the universal power of the human being; rather, they depend on the power that a part has over the whole. And if the most elemental demands regarding the governing of one's own body are trampled on in all latitudes, today we can only speak of aspirations that must become effective rights. Human rights do not belong to the past. They exist in the future, absorbing intentionality, feeding a struggle that comes alive with every new violation of the destiny of mankind. Due to this, every demand made in favour of human rights has meaning because it demonstrates to the powers-that-be that they are not omnipotent and that they do not control the future.

The world today is not organised as humanists want it to be organised; today's judicial system is not the judicial system that humanists proclaim. But until this changes, humanists must joint their efforts to better the conditions of the world they live in. This is how formal democracies today should acquire depth until attaining the qualitative level that corresponds to the dignity of the human being. If this action towards change is legitimate, a persistent struggle is also legitimate when conditions regress, in order to achieve what is minimally acceptable, even if it is far from being the best. What I mean to say is that wherever dictatorship exists, the humanists will be committed enemies; enemies that will fight until that "minimum" becomes acceptable...so that the transition from that dictatorship to a formal democracy becomes a fact where a new level of action and proposal can be attained.

But the world today has great urgencies, and we can appreciate the advancement in a positive direction. Then how could we not decisively support the policy of disarmament, which began with the incredible structural revolution of mentality that, since perestroika, and the practice of openness, opens the path towards the ideals of a new society?

How could we not support efforts in favour of the demilitarisation of Europe, the Caribbean, the Middle East, South-west Asia, and the South of Africa?

In fact, the progressive withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan, Cambodia and Angola; the cease fire between Iran and Iraq; the weakening of the aggression in Nicaragua; and the beginning of talks between Palestinians and Israelis: These are priorities to humanists, and it is as such that we understand all of this.

We are in favour of consolidating the unity of Europe; and when we speak of this, we do not only refer to the Common Market, but to the whole of Europe--East and West.

But as we face this situation, what effective efforts are being made to impede the death by annihilation of millions of human beings? Which, and how many, are the effective resources

mobilised to put an end to an asphyxiating and explosive debt in Latin America? In what proportion is the technology need for development transferred to less favoured zones? What real measures are adopted so that the terms of interchange do not deteriorate day to day between the North and the South?

Any figure given in reply to these questions, have has the taste of mockery and cynicism.

Today it is clear that the world is one; that there are no regions isolated from the whole, and that every catastrophe in one point has repercussions in others. Due to this, if we try to raise the level of less favoured zones, it will not only be for reasons of solidarity, but also for the survival of human life on the planet--which we consider to be a unity. The planet, considered also as the dwelling of the human being, now finds itself increasingly deteriorating.

It is not the moment to expand on these serious problems; rather it is the moment to recall one of the first ideas of Humanism in its political praxis: A people that are in a situation of increasing their real power (and not inter-mediated by the State or by the power of minorities), are also in the utmost condition to project themselves toward the future as the vanguard of a universal human nation. Humanist Parties in each place struggle for the following ideal: converting their country to the forefront of a universal human nation. If the particular idea of national parties within a common world project is understood as such, it will not remain a mere word; rather it will be understood as the full meaning of the proclamation "To Humanise the Earth."