

II. Congress of the Humanist International

Report by the Presidency

On the 7th of January 1989 the 1st Congress of the International took place, a milestone which concluded a process started in 1984 with the formation of the first Humanist parties. At this Congress the foundation documents of the Humanist International were adopted.

The attention of the political circles and the general public was polarised by the changes that began to take place in eastern Europe and in the USSR with the works of "Perestroika" and "Glasnost".

Considering the positive advances of that truly "mental revolution", and the beginning of the end of the politics of blocs, the world had followed since the second world war; also the Humanist International concentrated its attention on the chain of events which started to unfold in the socialist countries of eastern Europe, having strong consequences in many other countries around the world.

After the conclusion of the 1st Congress, a delegation from the International travelled to several countries in Eastern Europe, including, Yugoslavia, Hungary and Russia, meeting several representatives of political parties, unions, public institutions, and cultural, social, and economic organisations. With the aim to exchange views about the process of change and its possible perspectives for a humanist direction.

Before this visit another delegation from the Humanist parties of Argentina, Chile, Italy and Spain, had visited Yugoslavia in 1987. Invited by the government the humanists met in Belgrade; government authorities, the Socialist Alliance, unions, university institutes and self managed enterprises. The main interest of these meetings was to study closely the works of an economic system based on a co-operative organisation, its advantages, defects and possibilities.

Similarly the first contacts with the USSR and the ideologues of Perestroika had been established from Argentina with Ivan Frolov, member of the Academy of Science, founder of the Institute of Man, and later director of Pravda. In the following months the Committee of Solidarity with the Peoples of Latin America, made contact with the Humanist Party of Chile and invited some of its members to the USSR in 1990. As a result of this visit round table discussions were agreed between delegations of the Humanist International and personalities of the USSR.

In April 1991, members of the International from (Chile, Argentina, Italy, Canada, Peru, Britain, Spain and others) participated in seminars in Moscow. The topics discussed related to theoretical and practical aspects of humanism, generated rich exchanges between the humanists and academics and scientists participating in these meetings.

As a result of these discussions, The Humanist Club of Moscow was founded in May 1991 by Dr Boris Koval and members of several Institutes of the Academy of Science.

In June 1992 a delegation of the International with representatives of Spain, Italy, Argentina, France, Canada and Chile, and Silo, founder of the Humanist Movement, participated in Moscow in an international seminar under the title "Crisis of Civilisation and the Humanist Alternative". On the occasion several meetings took place with members of the Humanist Club, the Institute of

Philosophy of the Academy of science, the Gorbachov Foundation, the Humanitarian Academy of the Armed Forces, the Latin American magazine and others.

The acceleration of the social and political processes in the world, and the new perspectives for action opened to Humanist parties, required the calling of the Second Congress of the International, considering Moscow the most appropriate place for the event.

In November 1992, delegations of Humanist parties from 16 countries met in these same premises to hold a preparatory conference for the Congress, an event hosted by the Humanist Club of Moscow. The works of the conference set the basis for our work today, strengthening relationships between parties and other participating organisations.

A meeting of the organising committee took place in Buenos Aires in January 1993, General Nikita Chaldimov from the Humanitarian Academy of the armed Forces of Russia, gave a conference on the theme "Humanisation of the Armed Forces".

An International conference on the same theme was organised by general Chaldimov in Moscow in May 1993 where the Humanist International was represented and a paper by Silo on "The Need for a Humanist Position on Contemporary Armed Forces".

Although an emphasis on the East is expressed by the International during this period, we should mention other initiatives that took place during the last four years.

After the 1st Congress the International established contacts with the Workers Party of Brazil in 1989. In the same year the President of the International visited Paraguay to mediate in the liberation of political prisoners. In January 1991 a delegation of the International visiting Chile met president Aylwin, exchanging on the perspectives of the Latin American Common market and the situation of human rights in the region.

During a later visit to Chile in April this year the president of the International, held a press conference on the situation of political parties in Europe, followed by several interviews.

The activities of the International will intensify in the future, organising itself into regional areas. As an example the Humanist Party of Argentina joined the "Foro de San Pablo" (in which political organisations from Latin American and the Caribbean participate) in its fourth meeting in Havana last July.

The years since our 1st Congress have been marked by strong changes in all aspects of social life; we saw the alternation of violent conflicts and positive actions towards disarmament, peace and co-operation among nations.

The reports of the delegations who participated yesterday in informal exchanges, coincide in reflecting a deep social and political crisis in all countries independent from geographical area, political regime, or their so called level of development.

The failure of socialism as well as the failure of triumphant capitalism, has generated ideological confusion to the crisis of the traditional political parties. These do not represent anymore the people, nor the national interest, neither a social class since all these concepts have changed since.

In this situation of confusion and instability it is possible and necessary to wake up humanist forces capable of giving clear reference with well defined positions and permanent action.

With this perspective the Humanist International can fulfil an active role with a satisfactory presence in all countries. Finding out appropriate mechanisms and adopting the resolutions that can make that task possible, is the task of this 2nd Congress.