The IXth World Congress of the IVth International has just been held

To present and give an account of the proceedings of the IXth World Congress of the IVth International, which met February 8, 9 and 10, 2016, is not an easy exercise, because the discussions and political elaboration were so rich. This N° 89 of La Vérité/The Truth, theoretical review of the IVth International, is essentially devoted to the congress and to providing a set of material and documents allowing everyone to form his or her own opinion and to form a judgement on the basis of the reported facts.

First of all, we would like to insist on the political declaration that was adopted. It is by the way the only public document adopted by this World Congress. You will find it published in full in this issue. It may surprise some of our readers. It is voluntarily brief, concentrated and incisive. It is far from being one of those interminable declarations on the development of the objective situation, formally “correct” but distracting us from the present moment and the tasks to accomplish therein. This declaration states that there is no more urgent or more decisive task for revolutionaries building the IVth International, at this turning point in the world situation, than to immerse and anchor themselves in the heart of the class organizations which form the backbone of the struggle of the broad mass of workers.

This declaration is important. It is written in a simple form, accessible to all workers and youths in the vanguard who are asking themselves questions. Indeed, faced with the ongoing turmoil and the need to discuss and to act, this declaration fixes the place of the IVth International, which is to establish the necessary exchanges in the search for joint action to overcome the obstacles of the apparatus. It is the contrary to all ultimatism and lessons proffered by “red professors”. It is an instrument for the presentation of the IVth International, its political positions, in order to discuss them and to call upon workers and youths to strengthen the International on the eve of decisive class confrontations. We call upon you to discuss it with the militants of the IVth International, in the framework of the presentation meetings that they organize, in order to strengthen the ranks of the International and join in its struggle.

The congress saw the effective participation of delegates and guests from 28 sections or groups of the IVth International. But we have to note that delegations from some countries were refused visas by the French authorities, which effectively prohibited them from being present at the congress.

The congress first paid tribute to leaders of the IVth International who have died during the last period: Pavlusko Imsirovic (1), a Yugoslav militant, member of the International Secretariat, deceased in Belgrade in August 2014; Gérard Ilitis (2), treasurer of the French section since 1971, member of its leadership, deceased in November 2015; Louis Eemans (3), French Trotskyist militant since 1940 and childhood friend of Pierre Lambert, deceased in January 2016; and the Polish revolutionary militant Edmund Baluka (4), deceased in Warsaw in January 2015, with whom the IVth International maintained political relations.

Prior to the World Congress, the control commission, the International Secretariat and the General Council met. The latter adopted unanimously a mo-
tion submitted to the World Congress, proposing to reject any claim by the liquidationist center to be received in delegation by the IXth World Congress. After the roll-call of delegates duly mandated by sections, the congress proceedings began, and on a proposal from the bureau of the congress, composed of members of the elected Correspondence Committee, it unanimously first adopted the motion proposed by the General Council.

The proposed agenda included three reports, followed by discussion on the following points: 1) The situation of the IVth International; 2) Building strategy in the imperialist countries; 3) Building strategy in the oppressed (dominated) countries. Two commission meetings were organized according to the agenda: one on La Vérité/The Truth, the other on the declaration of the IXth Congress.

This issue of La Vérité/The Truth publishes large extracts from the three presented reports. We propose that you refer to them, as they establish the framework for the rich and rigorous discussion that followed.

The discussion on the first report allowed the World Congress to establish and register the ways and means by which the liquidationist offensive which sought to destroy the French section and the IVth International had been repulsed. By overcoming this crisis, the congress furnished itself with the means to move forward towards the construction of sections. With this orientation, numerous interventions in the discussion underlined the major role of the Correspondence Committee, elected unanimously by the General Council in March 2015, in impelling and developing debate between sections, breaking in this way with all forms of supervision, of verticalism, of “fiefdoms” and “reserved domains”. And one can stress the great maturity of the discussion on this first report, which established that the situation of the International is hereafter placed within the framework constituted during the conference of reproclamation of the IVth International of 1993, reaffirming the whole of the latter’s considerations and conclusions. That is not the least of the achievements of this congress.

The second day of the congress was opened by the presentation and discussion of the second report, dealing with the strategy of construction in the imperialist countries, especially in western Europe (see the report by Andreu Camps in this issue). The discussion established the framework for the reconstitution of the European bureau permitting exchange and political elaboration between the European sections, with the goal of building them through their intervention in the class struggle. In this discussion, numerous comrades showed how the demand “break with the European Union”, which is correct, could be used to mask the full responsibility of EU member governments, wholly subservient to the policies of finance capital, if one does not relate it to the struggle against each respective government. The central issue of the independence of class organizations in the face of the bourgeoisie was discussed as a constant question of what is at stake in every country. Numerous interventions illustrated the way in which sections of the IVth International are an active part of these real processes, through their intervention in the class struggle. To illustrate the end of “reserved domains”, we should regard as an achievement of this congress the fact that the report from the commission created to examine our intervention in the United States was made by a comrade from Azania.

The third day was largely devoted to discussion of the report on building sections of the IVth International in the oppressed (dominated, or dependent) countries, and especially the particular situation in Latin America (Venezuela, Brazil, Argentina, Peru, Chile...). The report took into account the turning point in the world situation and the need to homogenize the activity of sections of the IVth International, under the responsibility of the Pan-American bureau (PAB), fully integrating under its responsibility the work in the Caribbean, including the semi-colonial countries and colonies. A rich and fascinating discussion developed on the practical implementation of the strategic orientation of the anti-imperialist united front, a major and determining instrument for the defense of the sovereignty of nations faced with the dismemberment imposed by imperialism. This discussion established that the strategy of the anti-imperialist united front fully integrates the struggle for the workers’ united front, which at the present time is concentrated on the defense of trade union organizations and on the precise formulation of demands.

The discussion also touched upon key countries in Africa and the Middle East, especially the North African countries and Azania.

The congress registered the proposal to organize a cadre school for Latin American sections.

A discussion took place about the responsibility of the IVth International and its sections, on an equal footing with all the militants and leaders that are not Trotskyist, in order to make the International Liaison Committee of workers and peoples resume its full place, embedding itself in the struggle for genuine independent workers’ parties, needed by the working class in order to take power from the hands of finance capital.

A commission meeting on La Vérité/The Truth was held on the Tuesday evening and reported back to the congress on its work the following day. First of all, it indicated that we were able to assure the publication of the issues N°87 and N°88 within the regulatory deadlines imposed upon us, despite the crisis we have undergone. The congress registered the proposal to organize a cadre school for Latin American sections.
be followed up (in the N° 90, the continuation of the dossier on trade unions and in the following issues “Workers’ united front and anti-imperialist united front”). The congress mandated the International Secretariat and its Correspondence Committee to continue with the political elaboration in accordance with the needs for the intervention and training of militants.

As we have seen, and to summarise, the three reports submitted for discussion dealt with the situation of the IVth International and with the way in which it repelled the liquidationist offensive; with the building strategy in the advanced imperialist countries, that is, the materialization of a policy of workers’ united front; and finally, with the building strategy in the dependent countries, that is, application of a policy of anti-imperialist united front.

The congress approved the request for affiliation by the Haitian section to the IVth International and adopted unanimously a positive reply to this request. Let us recall that the Haitian section until then had the status of a sympathizing organization and that the political and organizational conditions had been met for this affiliation, as the report to the congress established.

The congress heard the report of the control commission and adopted unanimously the report it presented. (It must be noted that the group of liquidators made no appeal to the international control commission, nor to the control commission of the French section).

The IXth World Congress, in closing its proceedings with the election of the General Council, underlined the importance of the place and role of the Correspondence Committee. It is worth recalling that, faced with the non-preparation of meetings of the International Secretariat and the General Council by the former team of permanent officials of the International, this committee had been elected unanimously at the General Council meeting of March 2015. The goal of the Correspondence Committee was to prompt debate between the bodies and sections of the International, and thus to allow the International Secretariat to accomplish its task. It sought also to overcome the reserved domains, the verticalism and the compartmentalization that existed in the functioning of the organization of the International. It is obvious that the installation of this committee was one of the triggers for the liquidationist offensive, which strove to preserve the previous routine. We know what followed. Up to today’s date, 18 bulletins have been published in French, English and Spanish. Addressed to the leaderships of sections, they have in several cases been distributed to member militants. Without any doubt, the result is positive, but unequal. The congress discussion did however insist upon the need for the correspondence bulletin to be a real instrument of debate and exchange between the International Secretariat and sections, in which all members of the General Council and section leaderships can take their place.

The Correspondence Committee also acts to contribute to the constitution of continental bureaux, starting with those that are fully in place (the Pan-American bureau, the North-African bureau, the reorganization of the European bureau...). The congress also estimated it necessary to inform the leaderships of sections with political material and in this way to allow them to develop their own political elaboration. On the basis of this achievement, it is now a question of taking a new step forward in fully installing the continental bureaux.

Finally, the World Congress went on to elect the General Council, and from within that the International Secretariat. It also elected a control commission of five members.

By Wednesday, February 10, beginning at 6.30 p.m., the French section had already organized a large assembly-debate reporting back on this World Congress, with the participation of delegates from Spain, Venezuela, Brazil, Azania and Tunisia, as well as France. In this issue we publish large extracts of this event, which perfectly sums up the importance and the richness of the debates of this congress.

Henry Halphen, delegate to the IXth Congress


(2) Gérard Itlis (1942-2015). Informations Ouvrières n° 377 (the week of November 12 to 18, 2015) devoted its pages 14 and 15 to a “Tribute to Gérard Itlis, honor to our comrade Sorel”, with testimonies from Daniëlle, his wife, from Murielle, his daughter, from Michel Landron, his friend, and from Marc Gauquelin, in the name of the French section of the IVth International.

(3) Louis Eemans (1928-2016). Informations Ouvrières n° 384 (the week of January 14 to 20, 2016) published a “Tribute to our comrade Louis Eemans” on the pages 14 and 15, with testimonies from Janine and Liliane, his daughters, and from comrade Clement, in the name of the French section of the IVth International. La Lettre de La Vérité, in its n° 794 (January 18, 2016) and n° 796 (February 4, 2016) published an interview with the one whom we fondly called Petit Louis, entitled “Militant of the IVth International, organizer of the CERMTR”. “If you really want things to change, i.e. that there is a revolution, it’s first of all necessary to have an International,” is the conclusion of the pamphlet “Lessons from the bank strikes of July 1957”, which he wrote.

(4) Edmund Baluka (1933-2015). La Vérité n° 85, from March 2015, paid a tribute to him in a dossier of documents entitled “Edmund Baluka, revolutionary worker, trade unionist, political leader”. This dossier published documents from 1971 (when Edmund Baluka, then chair of the strike committee of Szczecin, confronted the prime minister Gierek), from 1982 (during the foundation of the Polish Socialist Workers Party), from 1983 (during the study days organized at the Mutualité, Paris), and finally his Letters from prison from 1983.