



Contribution of the Communist Party of Venezuela (PCV) to the 23rd International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties. Izmir-Turkey, October 19-22, 2023

Dear comrades, first of all, we want to convey the fraternal and supportive greetings of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Venezuela (PCV) to all the delegations of the Communist and Workers' Parties present at this important meeting, and very particularly, to greet and thank the comrades of the Communist Party of Turkiye for the extraordinary work done to receive the 23rd IMCWP and to guarantee its success.

As you surely know, our Party was finally judicially intervened and the Central Committee, elected by the XVI National Congress (November 3/5, 2022), banned through a spurious legal sentence. It is alarming that the executor of this assault was not a government led by the old social-democratic or extreme-right parties, but a government of the so-called "progressivism".

This exacerbation of anti-communism in Venezuela and the rise of state persecution against the workers' movement is closely related to the international offensive of capital against the rights of the working class, in the context of the current world crisis of the capitalist mode of production.

Capitalist crisis and imperialist aggressiveness

The intensity of this crisis is what explains the growing sharpening of inter-imperialist and inter-capitalist contradictions. In short, war, armament, sanctions, border tensions and warlike conflicts of different scales, are the most violent manifestations of competition between capitalist nations for the control of markets, trade routes and raw materials. Imperialist aggressiveness is also marked by the resistance of traditional powers such as the United States, the European Union and its armed wing NATO, to the loss of hegemony in the world economy.

The global situation is becoming more dangerous and the threat of major armed conflicts is a latent possibility. Likewise, the crisis has led to the resurgence and strengthening of ultra-nationalist, racist and xenophobic forces, which foment national hatred and serve the class conciliation strategies of capitalist governments in the framework of their competition with other nations.

Politically, these strong clashes of interests facilitate the processes of groupings of emerging capitalist countries that press for changes in the rules that govern political and trade relations that emerged from the post-war period. The so-called BRICS, and other forms of international alliances reflect the disputes of economic interests between capitalist poles, which have nothing to do with the end of imperialism or the emergence of a new, more just and democratic world order for the peoples.

We cannot lose sight of the close relations of interdependence that unite the capitalist countries in the world market, and that even with all the violent forms that competition can take, in the end the identity of interests that unite them prevails. In this sense, what underlies the appearance of the clash between supposedly "antagonistic" poles of the "multipolar" world is the struggle of the national expressions of global capital for more equitable conditions of exploitation of the world labor force and appropriation of global wealth. Therefore, we warn about the resurgence of the illusion of a humanizable capitalism at the service of the peoples, product of a change in the power relations between the capitalist nations.

While progressivism distracts the peoples with these geopolitical games and the hope of a more democratic and humane capitalist order, the harsh reality is that global capital accelerates its international crusade against the rights of the working class.

The capitalist states in general apply measures to protect monopolies, transferring the effects of the crisis, wars and commercial competition, onto the backs of the workers and, in general, of the peoples. Thus, labor reforms are applied that destroy historical rights won by the workers, retirement ages are increased, wages are frozen in the face of rising inflation, labor deregulation policies are advanced, basic services are privatized, and regressive taxes are approved. In short,



anti-popular measures are imposed in all the capitalist countries aimed at increasing the competitiveness of the monopolies at the cost of the sacrifice of the world working class as a whole.

In each country, the Communist Parties and the class-conscious workers' movement participate and lead important processes of struggle and resistance against the application of these regressive policies. However, the absence of an effective international articulation of the struggles of the working class, and of the consistent exercise of proletarian internationalism, weakens the capacity of our movement to defeat the world strategy of capital.

The absence of a common strategy and the fragmentation of workers' struggles at the international level is not the only problem facing the unity of our movement. Also the impact that progressivism has with its discursive manipulation of the tactic of unity against a main enemy is presented devoid of its class character with the clear intention of freezing the class struggle within each country and to neutralize the internationalist solidarity with the workers' movement that fights against the anti-popular policies applied by these reformist governments.

These ideological manipulations of progressivism tend to reach the extreme of classing these legitimate struggles of the workers' movement for their rights as actions instrumental to the plans of domination of imperialism. That is to say, not only do they raise barriers to proletarian solidarity, they also justify the policy of criminalization and repression of workers' struggles in those countries.

This is the complex reality in which the working class struggles at the global level, and that undoubtedly enhances the ability of the world bourgeoisie to successfully advance on their rights.

In these moments of worsening crisis and strong onslaught against workers' rights, the political vanguards of the working class must propose to move forward with a common strategy, which is an authentic expression of their interests and historical objectives. The changes that serve the interests of the working class can only come from their own struggles against the world bourgeoisie, and not as a result of rearrangements of forces between the capitalist powers.

The situation in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The Latin American and Caribbean continent reflects the changes in power relations that are shaking the world. The United States has lost a considerable part of its economic hegemony, although it retains its threatening military presence and maintains its policy of interference.

The old carrot and stick policy is still their means of imposing their hegemonic pretensions. It uses illegal criminal sanctions, such as those applied against the peoples of Cuba, Nicaragua and Venezuela; it secretly and openly deploys support for destabilizing plans against governments that do not favor the interests of its monopolies, and reinforces its military presence in the region in alliances with like-minded governments. But it also applies diplomatic channels of agreement to stop any process of change in favor of the interests of the peoples by the governments of progressivism.

The region is currently experiencing a new wave of so-called progressive governments. Certainly these electoral victories are related to an awakening of popular struggles in the region, however the character of the broad political-electoral alliance, which includes openly right-wing liberal and social democratic sectors, give these governments a more clearly conservative profile.

After 20 years, Latin American progressivism can no longer disguise its class limits, it has demonstrated its inability to carry out the fundamental transformations demanded by the working class in the continent. In some countries, it went from being the expression of social reforms to personify the application of aggressive anti-popular adjustments that dismantle conquered rights.

Despite this programmatic sincerity in several progressive governments, the political forces that sustain this maintain the narrative of a false antagonistic opposition between these governments



and those of the traditional right. The struggle is posed in terms of a false disjunction between neoliberal and progressive governments, selling the idea of a good capitalism and a bad one.

From the PCV we have expressed our solidarity with the processes of change that in the region express the yearnings of transformation demanded by the peoples and of rupture with U.S. hegemony; also making clear our opinion on the limits of these processes of polyclass alliances, and the need to strengthen the independent political action of the communist parties and the workers' movement as the only guarantee to advance in lasting conquests.

In some countries of the region, the alternation in government between the forces of progressivism and the traditional parties of the right, with their anti-popular management and inability to fulfill their promises of social reforms, have generated such a degree of despair, frustration and political demobilization among the popular masses, that they have favored the growth of ultra-liberal and nationalist political forces.

What is happening in Venezuela?

The Venezuelan process is an example of the limits of progressivism and the reformist character of the polyclass forces. The crisis of dependent and rentier capitalism, aggravated by the criminal sanctions, created the conditions for the government headed by President Nicolas Maduro Moros - representing the bourgeois and mafia faction that controls the State apparatus and the government - to apply the most aggressive anti-popular adjustment in the history of the country.

The neo-liberal turn of the government's economic policy, together with the complex scenario of the energy crisis provoked by the war in Ukraine, opened up the possibilities for the coincidence of interests and subsequent negotiation between imperialism, the bourgeoisie and the traditional landowning class, with the new bourgeois fraction (self-styled "revolutionary bourgeoisie") that directs the government in Venezuela.

As we informed you in the 22nd IMCWP in Havana, the country is advancing towards a process of deregulation and progressive lifting of the sanctions on the basis of a pact of elites and the implementation of an anti-popular economic adjustment that offers full guarantees to national and foreign private capital.

From the PCV we have been firm in our condemnation of the sanctions and imperialist interference. Both yesterday and today, we demand their immediate lifting without any kind of conditions. Likewise, we have rejected all negotiations that imply the surrender of sovereignty and the destruction of the rights of the working people. We condemn the impunity enjoyed by those who promoted this criminal policy, as well as those business sectors and politicians who took advantage of these circumstances to accumulate wealth, while the Venezuelan people suffer the worst hardships.

The anti-worker and anti-popular policy package

It is the working people who ultimately pay the consequences of the crisis and the imperialist sanctions; not the bourgeoisie, nor the ruling elite. The PSUV government, through an anti-worker and anti-popular policy, has been in charge of reducing the effects of the same on the business sector, transferring the entire burden on the working people.

The heart of the economic adjustment or the "Anti-Blockade Plan" -as they euphemistically call it- has been the destruction of the rights of the working class. Since the last wage increase 18 months ago, the purchasing power of the real wage has been destroyed by 90%. The legal minimum wage and pensions barely reach \$3 a month, due to the criminal policy of freezing wages in local currency, the dollarization of prices and an inter-annual inflation exceeds 400 %.

In its absolute subordination to the interests of business sectors, the government of Nicolas Maduro has deepened the policy of replacing wages with bonuses for workers' income as a compensatory measure. With this policy, the government has abysmally reduced labor costs, expanding the profit margins of capitalist enterprises. The anti-worker wage policy also has an



impact on the advance of the deregulation of the labor market, favoring conditions of overexploitation of the labor force. The results are working hours in excess of 8 hours a day, insufficient overtime pay, jobs without contracts and many other employer abuses.

But wages were not the only right sacrificed; through ministerial memorandum 2792, the collective bargaining agreements of workers in all branches were suspended. Next, by means of instructions issued by the public budget office (ONAPRE) they unilaterally and arbitrarily reduced the remuneration system of the public administration workers by applying salary cuts by half, and finally they eliminated de facto the right to social benefits, utilities and savings of the workers. All this, together with the precariousness of public services and the dismantling of essential conquests such as public health and education, make up a picture of savage overexploitation and alarming deterioration of the living conditions of working families.

Progressivism calls this criminal sacrifice of the rights of the working class for the profit of the capitalists "anti-imperialist resistance".

The government shirks all responsibility by shifting the blame for everything to imperialist sanctions. Although the sanctions have had a devastating impact on the economy as a whole, it is no less true that during this period, the government has allocated substantial public resources to subsidize the private sector, and another part has continued to be squandered due to corrupt management. Nearly \$10 billion in state subsidies were transferred to the private sector, through foreign exchange intermediation; some \$20 billion disappeared from the national oil industry in the midst of one of the most shameful corruption scandals of the government of Nicolas Maduro, and the accelerated enrichment of high-ranking civilian and military officials, business leaders and landowners, which is obvious. The enormous gap of social inequality in the country is the greatest evidence of a government that manages the crisis for the benefit of the most powerful.

State repression of workers' struggles

The neoliberal turn has generated an awakening of the struggles of the Venezuelan labor and union movement. An average of 17 protests per day are registered in the country for wage and labor demands. The main demands of the workers are the recognition of the right to a salary and pensions equal to the basic food basket, the reestablishment of collective bargaining agreements and an end to the criminalization of workers' struggles.

The response of the government and the state apparatus has been persecution, repression, and prosecution of workers' struggles. There are more than 100 cases of persecuted workers and many of them remain unjustly detained. Recently, two union leaders of the basic industries of Guayana were kidnapped and imprisoned while they were carrying out protests. To justify the illegal action, the courts issued a constitutional injunction in favor of the company prohibiting the exercise of the right to strike and any type of union protest.

The same repressive and intimidating practices are applied against education workers. Faced with the possibility of a strike in the sector, the Minister of Education has threatened teachers with massive layoffs and their replacement by unemployed or retired workers. This is a capitalist state using blackmail of the unemployed working class population to break class solidarity and pressure for lower wages.

As can be seen, the confrontation with imperialism does not annul the class struggle within the country.

Today, the government speaks openly of strategic alliance with the business federations and of the role of the State as a simple regulatory agent at the service of the interests of the capitalists. This liberal euphoria is giving free rein to the predatory action of landowners, agrarian and mining capital on the country's natural reserves. The ecological crisis of the Guayana mining arc is one of the most dramatic examples. This same action is advancing against the rights of native peoples: expelling them from their lands, destroying their habitat and repressing their resistance struggles.



As if this were not enough, the reactionary turn of the PSUV government is also being expressed in its alliances with religious extremism. The public budget for the year 2023 allocates more resources to the promotion of these cults than to scientific development.

The persecution of the PCV

The onslaught against the working class has also meant the imposition of restrictions on trade union freedoms and the exercise of their democratic right to organize in legal political parties.

The judicial intervention of the Communist Party of Venezuela, consummated last August 10 through the illegal sentence No. 1160, corresponds to this objective of disarming the working class of instruments of struggle in the midst of the brutal offensive against their rights.

On the judicial assault against our party, it is important that the Communist and Workers' Parties of the world know the following legal aberrations surrounding the sentence:

1. The Constitutional Chamber of the Supreme Court of Justice (TSJ) issued sentence N° 1160 in response to an appeal introduced by a group of non-members of the PCV, that is to say, it admitted a lawsuit presented by persons who did not meet the legal qualification to act on behalf of the PCV, and therefore, it violates the Organic Law of Protection and Constitutional Guarantees; 2. The appeal filed by these mercenaries did not contain evidence to corroborate their membership of the PCV and to prove the veracity of the allegations made in the writ, which means that the TSJ adopted a decision without verifying the facts. In turn, the Constitutional Chamber denied the constitutional right to a defense of the Communist Party of Venezuela, ignoring the defense brief and evidence introduced by the PCV, flagrantly violating the rule of law and due process; 4. The TSJ appointed an Ad Hoc Board composed of seven (7) non-members of the PCV to assault the legal figurehead of the party, illegally disregarding the Central Committee elected by the XVI Congress of the PCV. 5. This Ad Hoc board is integrated as follows: three (3) members of the PSUV, one (1) member of the Somos Venezuela party, one (1) ex-candidate of the UPP89 party, and two (2) ex-members of the PCV. It is conferred the power to assume the legal rights of the PCV and reorganize all its structures at the national level.

As can be seen, sentence 1160 is a complete legal aberration with no basis in Venezuelan law. We are facing an authoritarian exercise of state power to implement the political decision of the leadership of the government to try to destroy the Communist Party of Venezuela.

The usurpation of the legal figurehead of the Party allows these mercenaries to resort to state force to deprive the true leadership of the PCV and its membership of the headquarters and assets of the party. Already since the issuance of the sentence, these mercenaries -with the support of the PSUV leadership- have proceeded to form new regional leadership structures with the presence of middle leaders of the PSUV, evangelical communities and members of other organizations subordinated to the government, making it evident that no PCV member participates in their farce and that we are facing a vile and shameful assault directed from the government.

The legal intervention of the PCV has a clear purpose: to destroy the class resistance of the workers to the anti-popular adjustment, to weaken the struggles for wages and labor demands, and to prevent the strengthening of a revolutionary alternative to the two blocs of the bourgeoisie responsible for the national disaster: the one exercised by the government and the one made up by the various traditional right-wing oppositions.

By assaulting the PCV, the working class lost the last party with legal status it had left, this means that it was also robbed of its right to participate with its own candidacies, representing its true interests, in the presidential elections of 2024 and the parliamentary elections of 2025. The pact of elites has thus fulfilled the objective of sequestering future electoral processes for the exclusive participation of the parties of the bourgeoisie.



The way in which the assault on our party was executed, has made evident the level of moral decomposition of the PSUV in its desperation to contain the popular struggles and to present itself as a reliable force for the interests of the business sectors and the imperialist monopolies.

We want to thank the Communist and Workers' Parties for their expressions of solidarity, and we invite them to sustain an international campaign to demand that the illegal sentence No. 1160 be revoked and that the legal and democratic rights of the authentic membership of the Communist Party of Venezuela be restored.

Regardless of the divergence we have in the characterization of the government of Venezuela and its party, the attack against the right to exist of a Communist Party must generate a forceful and unhesitating response from the International Communist Movement. The Plan of Action that we approved in the 22nd IMCWP in Havana summons us to **"express solidarity with the communists who face persecution and prohibitions of the free exercise of their political and social rights"**, but also to **"carry out international campaigns in solidarity and support to the struggle of the working class... in their just claim for the right to unionization, better wages, working conditions and their democratic rights."**

We assure you that the plans of the bourgeoisie and its parties to destroy the PCV will not pass. They will fail like the other three previous attempts in our history, for the simple reason that our politics is a genuine expression of the interests of a working class struggling to regain its rights.

We hope that our experience will serve as a lesson and teachings to the Communist and Workers' Parties of the world. As Lenin rightly said, **"Everything is illusory except power"**.

We Communist and Workers' Parties have great challenges in these decisive moments of the class struggle worldwide. About our position and role, we only want to remember a quote from Marx and Engels in the Manifesto of the Communist Party:

"The Communists are distinguished from the other working-class parties by this only: 1. In the national struggles of the proletarians of the different countries, they point out and bring to the front the common interests of the entire proletariat, independently of all nationality. 2. In the various stages of development which the struggle of the working class against the bourgeoisie has to pass through, they always and everywhere represent the interests of the movement as a whole. "

Long live proletarian internationalism!