

## In Defence of the Party [Letter of the 100]

by Militants and Leaders of the Communist Party of Brazil

August 1961

With the ends of clarifying our readers about the process of internal struggle that have been happening in the communist ranks, the editorial staff of A Classe Operária decided to publish the letter that around 100 known communist militants and leaders sent, in August of last year, to the old Central Committee. This document, written in fraternal terms, as it is required to the just relationship between communists, requested that the party leadership rendered ineffective decisions adopted by it in respect of the creation of a new party and that would run counter to the resolutions of the fifth congress. The old leadership of the PCB answered these requests with arbitrary administrative measures. Taking note of this letter, the communists and workers can judge the behavior of their signatories and the current leadership of the Brazilian Communist Party (PCB).

(A Classe Operária, April 1962)

To the Central Committee  
of the Communist Party of Brazil

The supplement to the New Roads newspaper (Novos Rumos), of August 11<sup>th</sup> 1961, published the Program and the Statutes of the then called Brazilian Communist Party. Comrade Prestes, in a manifesto targeting the people, published in the same newspaper, says that those documents will be mailed to the Superior Electoral Court (TSE), with the registering of this party in mind.

These documents constitute, in the way we see it, a frontal violation to party principles, running in open contradiction to the decisions of the 5<sup>th</sup> Congress, damaging the discipline and striking the Party's own unity. Article 32 of the Statutes says: "(...) The decisions of the Congress are mandatory to the whole Party and can't be revoked, in whole or in part, unless by another Congress (...)".

Nonetheless, the Central Committee changed the Party's name, deeply changed the Statutes and presented a new program, exclusive attributions of the Congress, thus exorbiting its functions.

The 5<sup>th</sup> Congress only authorized the Central Committee to introduce, for the purposes of registration with the TSE, the changes required by the Law, such as the allocation of the Party's assets in the event of its dissolution, the appointment of delegates to the electoral courts and judges, the assertion that Party members are not liable for the Party's financial obligations, etc.; which was not included in the Statutes approved at that Congress.

Both the Program and the Statutes, to be presented to the Electoral Court, refer to the Brazilian Communist Party. It is, therefore, a question of changing the name of our Party, a matter not submitted to Congress and not even included in its resolutions. The Central Committee did not provide any justification.

It is right that under certain circumstances it is necessary to change the Party's name. It all depends, although, of the objective and subjective conditions of the revolution. But always with the decision being of the Congress.

What are the facts that impose in Brazil the change of the name of the party organization of the communists? The change done, in a linguistic perspective, is meaningless. But in a political perspective, this seemingly small change is a serious concession to the reactionary forces.

The most backward elements in the country, in their systemic fight against the revolutionary vanguard of the working class, since 1945, have been hurling the accusation that our Party having the designation of Communist Party of Brazil instead of Brazilian Communist Party meant that our Party was not Brazilian, but a tool of Soviet foreign policy. Such a cretinal misrepresentation that it never found an echo among the people.

Events were responsible for refuting that stupid slander, showing that the Communist Party of Brazil is a patriotic party par excellence, the best, the most selfless and the most consequential defender of the workers' interests.

Precisely for this reason, we have always maintained fraternal ties with the Communist Party of the Soviet Union; most experienced and proven detachment of the international communist movement.

Introducing this change of name of the Party, the Central Committee gives rise to explorations and provides elements to justify one of the most infamous slanders directed against Brazilian communists.

It is summarily ridiculous to think that legalizing the Party depends on it calling itself Brazilian Communist Party and not Communist Party of Brazil. The argument that another name would be needed to apply for a new Party registration, because the Court had revoked its registration under the old name, is unfounded.

It wasn't for this reason that the Party was made illegal. The unfounded accusation that the Party did not meet the requirements of Article 141, §13 of the Constitution of the Republic served as a pretext.

In this case, then, if there are political conditions for the registry of the Party, it would be enough to expressly reaffirm that the Party defends the plurality of parties and respects fundamental human rights.

In reality, this change has a more serious meaning – it seeks to register a new party, with a program and statutes that have nothing to do with the true Communist Party.

What the communists and the working class want and the people aspire to is the legalization of their old and traditional Communist Party that for more than 39 years fought for democracy, national liberation, the well-being of workers and for revolutionary change in Brazilian society, with socialism and communism in mind.

The fight for legalization of the Party is a political fight and as one it can't be done concealing its goals, its doctrine and its tradition.

Thinking this way, we do not agree with the name change of our glorious Party.

Another question of principle is in respect of the Program, which the approval is also of exclusive competence of the Congress. The document handed out to the New Roads media as being the program of communists is actually the negation of the Revolutionary Party of the proletariat in exchange of a hypothetical legality.

The program under consideration is a complete renunciation of principles. Inadmissible on any claim. It is an unacceptable program for a workers' party, typical of a bourgeois party, less advanced than the programs of the PTB and the PSB. This program was not approved at the 5<sup>th</sup> Party Congress. The latter was limited to drafting a Political Resolution.

Now, the Central Committee presents a program from which it eliminated the most radical formulations that can still be found in the Political Resolution of the 5<sup>th</sup> Congress. As an example, look at the question of land reform.

While the Resolution says that the communists have a duty to fight ahead of the peasant masses for an agrarian reform that would eliminate the latifundiários' monopoly of land ownership, the program of the Brazilian Communist Party refers in a generic way to the "carrying out of agrarian reform throughout the country" and presents partial measures less advanced than those proposed in the bill by deputy Joffily, which has the full support of the federal government.

Due to an imperative of party discipline, we are obliged to abide by the Political Resolution of the 5<sup>th</sup> Congress, to fight for its application. But nothing obliges us to accept a reformist condensed form of the measures set out in it as the Party's Program, since the 5<sup>th</sup> Congress did not take any deliberation in this regard.

Furthermore, modifications were introduced in the final programmatic objectives of the Party. The 5<sup>th</sup> Congress addressed this issue in the Statutes, in which it is clearly stated that the "ultimate programmatic objective of the Communist Party of Brazil is the establishment of socialism and communism". Now, both the Program and the Statutes of the Brazilian Communist Party say that this party has "as its ultimate objective the establishment of socialism".

Why has communism been taken out as a goal? Looking to get the blessings of Electoral Court, the Central Committee has spoken vaguely of socialism, which, deprived of its meaning, today any more or less perceptive bourgeois candidate beckons demagogically to

delude the masses that awaken to the true victorious socialism in countries with a population of more than a billion people.

If at the time that Marx was alive communism was but a goal to reach, remote objective that a Workers' Party would include in its program, at present, when communist society is being built in the Soviet Union, it is absurd to hide this objective.

The program is for us Communists a vital question. Brazilian public opinion is completely confused about the true purposes and way of acting of the Party. Under these conditions, it is necessary to have a clear and precise program.

There is no room for omissions or doubts. More than ever we need to take into account the teachings of Marx and Engels in the Manifesto of the Communist Party: "Communists do not stoop to concealing their opinions and ends."

Thinking this way, we cannot agree with the Program of the so-called Brazilian Communist Party.

The same capitulationist spirit can be found in the Statutes. Essential questions of principle were set aside, opportunistically silenced. In an attempt to obtain, in any way, the electoral registration of the so-called Brazilian Communist Party, the Central Committee, disregarding the decisions of the 5<sup>th</sup> Congress, removed from the Statutes any reference of Marxism-Leninism and of proletarian internationalism.

In the course of preparation for the 5<sup>th</sup> Congress all attempts to eliminate these issues were defeated.

The Statutes, with the changes introduced, identify, in most of their devices, with the Statutes of other political parties, ceasing to be an instrument for training cadres and ideological education of communist militants.

The statement in the Statutes approved at the Congress that the "Communist Party of Brazil is guided by Marxism-Leninism, by the principles of proletarian internationalism" defines the Party's character and distinguishes it from other parties, it is not a secondary issue that may or may not appear in our internal Law.

The principles of Marxism-Leninism and of Proletarian Internationalism constitute the base that assures party unity. They are the link that binds the communists of each country and the whole world.

The exclusion of any reference to the doctrine of the proletariat runs counter to the declaration of the Conference of Representatives of Communist and Worker's Parties, that happened in Moscow in 1957; and reaffirmed by the meeting of 81 Parties in 1960.

The declaration states: "The application of dialectical materialism to practical work, the education of cadres and of the large masses in the spirit of Marxism-Leninism – this is one of the modern tasks of the Communist and Worker's Parties".

How to put this indication in practice if the Party Statutes, printed on the central organ, omit any reference to Marxism-Leninism?

When the victorious experiences of the working class of the whole world as well as the unprecedented development of the socialist countries prove the strength and invincibility of Marxism-Leninism, when the ideas of scientific socialism arouse great interest among broad layers of the Brazilian people, particularly with the youth, to fail to mention that the Party is guided by this theory means to renounce revolutionary positions; it means, however good the intentions, to give reason to the contemporary revisionists.

There is no reason to omit that the Party is guided by proletarian internationalism, that unites true patriotism in a harmonious whole – to the struggle to emancipate our Motherland from imperialist domination and to free it from any kind of oppression – to the common struggle of workers in other countries for peace, democracy and socialism.

The principles of proletarian internationalism are an integral part of the organic structure of the vanguard workers' parties, it pervades their activities in every field.

When requesting its electoral registration, the Party must affirm the principle that it resolutely maintains its solidarity with workers throughout the world. The elimination of the principle of proletarian internationalism in the Statutes reveals how far bourgeois nationalism has penetrated the Party.

Thinking in this way, we cannot agree with the fundamental changes carried out in the Party Statutes.

The changes made in the name, in the Program and in the Statutes, running counter to the decisions of the 5<sup>th</sup> Congress, aim to register a new party and, therefore, everything that can be identified with the Communist Party of Brazil, with such glorious traditions, is removed. Now, precisely the party that must conquer its legality is the Communist Party of Brazil and not an imitation of the vanguard party of the proletariat.

Now, it is the Brazilian Communist Party and not the true Communist Party of Brazil, which is denied under the pretext of circumventing possible difficulties in the Electoral Court.

The changes introduced are not formal, as both the Program and the Statutes cannot be changed in any way, under penalty of the new party having its registration revoked, if it obtains legality. In this sense, the Electoral Code is exhaustive.

Its article 141 states: "A directory that becomes responsible for violating the program or statutes of its political party, or for disrespecting any of its regularly taken deliberations, shall incur the penalty of dissolution."

So, the documents published in New Roads are the basic documents that will guide the activity of the new party, which will not be able to leave the narrow boundaries set by them. So much so that the new nomenclature is already being used, even by the Central Committee.

These facts represent a clear attempt to liquidate the traditional vanguard party of the working class and replace it with an organization devoid of revolutionary characteristics.

It is the newest and most dangerous manifestation of liquidationism, trend that has already emerged several times in the Brazilian communist movement.

In this case, Lenin's quote about liquidationism is quite opportune, defining it as attempts to "liquidate (that is, dissolve, destroy, nullify, suppress) the existing Party organization and replace it with a formless association maintained at all costs within the framework of legality (that is, the legal 'public' existence), although for this it is necessary to clearly and openly renounce the program, tactics and traditions (ie past experience) of the party".

The Party's legality cannot be obtained through legal manipulations, nor through concessions in matters of principles, and even less by trying to deceive the justice of the ruling classes with maneuvers, because, ultimately, the deceived will be the workers and the communists themselves. .

The achievement of electoral registration of the Party is an eminently political matter that depends on the struggle and the correlation of class forces, both nationally and internationally.

If the solution to achieving this legality were exclusively legal, then why, in the recent past, did the Electoral Court not recognize the Progressive People's Party and the Brazilian Democratic Alliance, which satisfied all the requirements of the Electoral Law, had names that in no way resembled communism, they had structures and nomenclatures that quite differed from those of the Communist Party of Brazil and the direction had no Communists?

Although such parties were not Marxist-Leninist, the reaction forces feared the very possibility that they would offer their subtitles to Communist candidates. That is why the court did not grant them registration, claiming that their existence would circumvent the sentence that made our Party illegal.

We are in favor of a campaign to make the Party's return to legal life possible. We believe it is possible to achieve this goal. But we want the legality of the revolutionary party of the working class that has Marxism-Leninism as its doctrine and is guided by the principles of proletarian internationalism.

In the present situation, in which international tension is aggravated due to the provocative policy of government circles by the United States, and when in Brazil the feeling of the masses for revolutionary transformations grows, more than ever, the existence of a party with a revolutionary program and tactics and Leninist statutes is indispensable – in short, a Marxist-Leninist party.

It is surprising, therefore, that precisely in this situation, the Central Committee presents documents that are beyond the definition of a true proletarian revolutionary party.

Our attitude in sending this letter to the Central Committee is dictated by the duty to combat the violation of the decisions of the 5<sup>th</sup> Congress, by the desire to ensure party unity and to safeguard the Party's existence as a revolutionary political organization of the vanguard of the working class.

We are convinced that Party unity, based on Marxist-Leninist principles, is paramount.

The conduct of the Central Committee hurts unity because many militants, aware of their role and in defense of the decisions of the 5<sup>th</sup> Congress, will not accept the liquidation of the old Party, and will remain faithful to it, keeping the banner of their best traditions high.

The existence of a Marxist-Leninist party is an objective necessity in the development of Brazilian society that no one will be able to avoid.

In view of the situation created by the Central Committee, we turn to it, appealing to the party spirit of its members, in the sense that they abide by the decisions of the 5<sup>th</sup> Congress, replacing the documents published in *New Roads* by others that are in line with the decisions of the last Congress, or else convene an Extraordinary Congress to decide on the change of the Party's name and changes to the Program and the Statutes.

By adopting this position, we trust that within the ranks of the Party itself there are sufficient forces to defeat the erroneous tendencies and find the right way to resolve the difficulties facing the Party.