

5to SEMINARIO EUROPA, AMERICA LATINA y CARIBE

**visiones
compartidas**



desde la
izquierda



ON LINE FACEBOOK

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Impactos socio-economicos de la pandemia y propuestas desde la izquierda

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2DO PANEL

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5TH SEMINAR EUROPE, LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN EL/FSP

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Introduction

MARCO CONSOLO - Coordinator of the EL working group on Latin America and the Caribbean

Good morning, good afternoon and good evening to all of you, depending on where you are on the planet. Welcome. It is a pleasure and an honour to open this 5th seminar “Shared Visions”, jointly organised by the Sao Paulo Forum and the Party of the European Left.

The aim of this seminar is to strengthen the dialogue between the left parties and organizations in Latin America and the Caribbean and Europe, and to continue working on a common agenda of mobilisations against common challenges, as we have been doing for several years.

Its goal is thus the consolidation of an on-going dialogue and a growing convergence towards the realisation of a common agenda of ideas and actions in the two continents.

This seminar is dedicated to analysing the socio-economic impacts of the COVID 19 pandemic and LEFT proposals on both continents.

Needless to say, the pandemic has had, and continues to have, an enormous effect: impacting dramatically on the health, social and productive spheres, leading to growing mass unemployment on both continents and a significant contraction of GDP worldwide. In Latin America, it has hit especially hard those countries with public health systems which have often been weakened as a result of privatisation of the sector and the absence of mass care based on territorial medicine.

In general terms, the regional political picture in Latin America has seen electoral victories for left-wing, progressive and popular forces in several countries (Mexico, Argentina, and recently in Bolivia and Venezuela). In Ecuador, a very important electoral process is currently being played out with tomorrow’s result meaning a possible return to the path of democracy and progress in the event of a victory for the candidates of the “binomial of hope”, with the presidential formula Arauz-Rabascall. On 28th of February there will be other important legislative and municipal elections in El Salvador, while harassment towards Venezuela and Cuba continues, with a blockade that is getting tougher and tougher. At the same time, the situation in Brazil is well known, especially the dramatic impact that the pandemic is having on the country, with Bolsonaro’s “denialist” policy and attitude. Our comrade Monica Valente, Secretary of the Sao Paulo Forum, is with us, and I imagine she will touch on this issue.

I would also like to point out the emergence of social movements, especially on the Latin American continent. In particular, I would like to recall the large mobilisations in Colombia against the neoliberal policies of the government and for the respect of the peace agreement; I would like to recall Ecuador itself and the social movements that mobilised at the end of 2019, and in Chile, the so-called “estallido social” (“social explosion”), which led to the imminent historic vote on 11th April, regarding the “Constituent Convention” in order to finally get rid of Pinochet’s constitution. And, in recent months, the massive mobilisations in Haiti and Peru. In the latter country, presidential and legislative elections will be held on the 11th April. The picture is less dynamic in Europe, where it is difficult to articulate the resi-

stance struggles in the different countries and on a continental level.

I would also like to emphasize the important role of the feminist movement that has taken to the streets of many cities on both sides of the ocean, as well as that of environmental movements, which are increasingly central in the struggles against the irrational exploitation and plundering of the planet, with different levels of anti-capitalist consciousness.

At the same time, there is growing pressure from multinationals and some European governments to sign new Free Trade Agreements (FTA), particularly between the EU and Mercosur, which attack the environment, agriculture and food sovereignty, health, labour rights and the productive fabric, particularly SMEs.

In the background there is obviously the change in the US administration, with Joe Biden taking the reins. We welcome Trump's defeat, but we have no illusions about this change of leadership, and it remains to be seen what kind of international policy Biden and his administration will propose towards the Latin American continent, Europe and the world. Particularly in a scenario in which the decline of the political and commercial hegemony of the US and of the dollar, as the international currency of reference, is increasingly evident.

Well, I will stop here, with these few guidelines for discussion. I would like to thank all the speakers and all the comrades who have worked very hard to ensure that this seminar takes place. I would like to point out that there are translations into English, Italian and Spanish. I don't know if Jorge would like to add anything. Go ahead, Jorge.

JORGE DRKOS - Member of the FSP-EL liaison commission

Good morning Marco, I would like to join in your greetings, in your words of welcome, and the brief concepts you have expressed. And I would like to share with all those who are listening and watching us through the different means of communication, that we are going to change the order of the seminar slightly, because Oscar Laborde, president of Parlasur and head of the electoral mission of the Mercosur congress in Ecuador at the moment, has an interview with the presidential candidate Arauz in a few minutes. So, we give the floor to share and listen to comrade Oscar Laborde.

Oscar is a leader with a long political history here in Argentina: he has been a mayor, a legislator, ambassador, and is currently chairing the Parlasur delegation in Ecuador in this important task of international monitoring, together with comrades from the EL who are participating there, such as Maite Mola.

We will give the floor to Oscar and then we will continue with the pre-established order, which means that comrade Aida Naranjo from Peru will begin to moderate the first panel with the rest of the contributions. So we invite everyone who is following us right now to listen to the speech by Oscar Laborde, who asked us to take this leave of absence so that he could be here and share his presentation at the seminar.

First Panel

OSCAR LABORDE - President of the Mercosur Parliament. Parlasur-Argentina

Thank you very much Jorge, a big thank you to the organisers. It is very interesting that the left, as part of the popular movement, constantly questions itself and its own direction in a moment of dispute in the world and in Latin America, isn't it? And I say this because, I have the impression (I intend to emphasise this in my speech and I want to leave this message), the left can only conceive of itself as prosperous if it sees itself within the popular movement, seeks its unity and its achievements.

Latin America is in dispute. Here there was a strong idea that they wanted to impose on us, that the period of prosperity that took place from 2000 to 2015, to put a date on it, that virtuous period, that moment of success of the popular governments in each country and of articulation between us, was over. It had only been an exceptional parenthesis, never to be repeated.

Indeed, we must affirm and remember that moment. Not in a nostalgic way, but politically, what it means that, from 2000 to 2015, many countries were able to have popular governments and, above all, that these popular governments were able to articulate among themselves. Previously, in America there had been the possibility of popular, left-wing governments triumphing, but there had not been the opportunity for them to articulate among themselves, achieving hegemony in bodies such as Mercosur, UNASUR and CELAC.

Those were the best times in Latin America, with an active role for the state, a concern for the poorest sectors, the development of work, growth in all the economic parameters, but also in the social sector. And the popular movements at that time found their own way in each place. The processes were different in Venezuela, in Ecuador, in Argentina, in Brazil, in Uruguay, in Paraguay, in each of these instances. What they did have in common, however, was the idea of seeing ourselves, verifying ourselves, in our condition of having to both confront the empire and at the same time within our nations to watch over the fate of the most humble and to generate work. That is why we, in the Sao Paulo Forum, with Monica, with Jorge, with Roy Daza himself, have paid a lot of attention to the issue of the term "national" and what it means for us. We are national and popular. And this perhaps is a difference with other left groups even in Europe.

We are national because we have to unite the anti-imperialist forces, and we are popular because within our nations we have to fight against the sectors of concentration of power. We are both. There can be no separation. And this is how it was understood. As we have said, Mercosur improved with the incorporation of Venezuela, it was given a social key, UNASUR was created, and I really believe that it is the most appropriate body for what happened in the region. This idea that for the first time in Latin America, the presidents, the governments, came together, didn't they? And CELAC was created, no more and no less than the OAS, minus Canada and the United States, plus Cuba.

But of course, the United States was not going to happily allow us to go down this road without confronting us. And here it seems to me, comrades, that the left must quickly

review the reasons for its defeats and its successes. I believe that the empire learned a lot from its defeats, for example in Vietnam, and it also learned a lot from the defeat of the “No to ALCA” (FTAA). No to FTAA was the most important diplomatic and political defeat the empire suffered. The military defeat was Vietnam, but the most important political and diplomatic defeat was the “No to Ftaa”. The following day they were planning the counter-offensive. The following day they were thinking about the success of the popular movements in Latin America, that oversight, and how to reverse it. Adapting their tactics. And it seems to me that the popular movement has to do that permanently, to re-think itself and to know on each occasion what has to be done at that moment. And the empire understood. It understood that it had suffered a setback, and automatically began to work to reverse it.

The counter-offensive, that conservative counter-offensive, installed “lawfare” (we all know what it is), and many of us have suffered from lawfare. It created a new, different, distinct right wing, a right wing that had nothing to do with the traditional parties, but which was made up of businessmen, successful, carefree, who came to politics to “help us”, and proceeded to harass the popular governments. Harassment that made us become self-absorbed. In Brazil, in Argentina, in Venezuela, in Ecuador, in Paraguay, etc., we had to withdraw into ourselves because the harassment was so strong.

I would like to say that there was also, perhaps, some lack of constancy with integration from 2012 onwards, that is my opinion. There was very strong harassment and there was also, because of the need to worry a lot about what we had in our own countries, some weakness in standing firm with integration.

But this counter-offensive did not crystallise. What characterises the period, comrades, is not the irreversible advance of the right. There were successes of the right, but that is not the main characteristic, if we were concerned, as we were taught as children, to always identify the main characteristic. The main characteristic of Latin America is the struggle of its peoples against the consequences of neoliberal measures. Sometimes it is against the neoliberal model, but in general it is against the consequences of the neoliberal model. Because this is not the 90s, when neoliberal projects won and were re-elected. The difference with the 1990s is that, at that time, the United States had achieved its main victory against the ideological, moral, geopolitical enemy of the Soviet Union. So it seemed that there was no other way to go through globalisation without surrendering to the United States. Now there is China, there is Russia, there are different poles.

What remains for me from that time is regional integration. It is having tried to be a pole in a multipolar world. That was the great achievement. And that was the big problem they had, that’s why the United States attacked us so much, because they couldn’t allow there to be another pole in addition to those that already existed. A virtuous pole, a pole where we grew economically. A pole where Mexico, Argentina and Brazil joined the G20, a pole where they created the BRICS, a pole where Brazil organised the Olympics and the World Cup, a pole where when the Argentine president spoke at the United Nations she made herself heard. A pole that managed to defeat them, with the unity of Chávez, Lula, Néstor and others, didn’t it?

So we must maintain, as our main objective, to be a pole in a multipolar world. And

it's not the 90's, comrades, because there is another consciousness. I would say that here there is an awareness of recent memory, the recent memory, right? As Cristina rightly said, you don't have to go back much further: how you lived before and how you live now. Why do Brazilians want Lula to be president? Because it is a simple but profound thought. With Lula they lived well, and they think that if Lula is president again, they will live well. And that's what happened in Argentina, and that's why we won, among other things. That happened in Bolivia, and that will happen in Ecuador.

So they had achievements, but because of this, they could not crystallise the counter-offensive of the right. And there was a response from the popular movement. A response from the popular movement as best it could, fighting. With its consequences, because you see that in Ecuador this certain possibility (we will talk about this later) of Arauz winning, has to do with the uprising of a gas protest in Ecuador.

And in Chile it has to do with the student ticket. In other words, it could be that the "Citizen's Revolution" will return to govern Ecuador. And it could be that the Chilean constitution is transformed by the struggle of the people against measures that were apparently minor, but which revealed the anger, the anger, the resistance that governments have against neoliberal measures.

But of course, with Lawfare the enemy complicated things for us. I like to see history as a struggle of classes and sectors, as I was also taught as a child, and that at every moment you have to adapt. So there was a process, comrades, which I see as follows: all of us who were in popular governments had travelled that road. First we resisted neoliberalism, then we set up a social and political movement, then we found a leader, then we won. And then we governed. What the empire is doing is preventing us from achieving the two final stages of this journey. Proscribing comrades, lying with the issue of Lawfare, even preventing some leaders from being able to freely exercise their status as candidates.

So it seems to me, and I am trying to finish, that the popular movement has found an alternative. In three steps, I would say.

First, a profound mobilisation. If the popular movement does not mobilise in the streets, it is very difficult for us with the art of politics, to confront the neoliberal powers that have the complicity of the media and all the economic groups. A big mobilisation.

Second, unity. Unity and breadth, comrades. That's why I say that the left has to see itself as part of the popular movement, where unity is necessary, but unity is not enough. Because unity means coming together with those who think alike. Breadth, and in the case of Argentina we are doing it, with those who think differently. Of course, that later brings us a lot of problems when we govern. Now, if we don't, it is difficult to win. It is very difficult to win.

And then, the adequacy of leaderships. You can see that in Argentina the binomial won without Cristina Fernández at the head, in Bolivia the binomial won without Evo as a member of the binomial, and in Ecuador it is possible that the formula will win without Correa. So, faced with the impediment of the leaders, which was an obstacle for the popular move-

ment, such powerful figures, communicating with the people, ¿how could we replace them? The popular movements in Argentina, Bolivia and Ecuador found an alternative. Of course, this brings with it the difficulty that these heterogeneous fronts then find it difficult to happily go down the road of governability. But in my opinion that is the only challenge.

That is what I wanted to tell you. I think it is an interesting moment for Latin America, I think the fact that Bolivia has come back within a year is extraordinary, comrades. We had never come back in a year after a defeat. It took us four years and it took Perón in Argentina 18 years after a coup d'état to come back. In Bolivia he came back within a year. And with everything they did in Ecuador, it is very likely that the same thing will happen, he will surely win the first round, and it remains to be seen if he wins definitively in the first round. And in Argentina, after everything they did to us, Cristina is back as vice-president.

So I have the impression that this is a moment of dispute, and I don't think that, from now on, all the processes will be successful, virtuous. In the same way that we say "the right wing does not win one election after another", we are not going to start now on a path without any difficulties. So, conceiving history as the struggle of the peoples and the regions, the struggle of the people against imperialism and against the elites, I believe that this continues.

And we are in a very interesting moment, fundamentally because the people have not adopted their model. That's why democracy is shrinking, because they can't get the consensus of the people, so they shrink democracy. And we have been able to overcome this. And we see it here in Ecuador, comrades. They ban Correa, they put in another formula. They prevent him from having the binomial or the party, they get another party. They don't allow Correa to campaign, they look for a way.

So the democratic path is the way to struggle of the popular movement, which today has no other option. In the 1970s we had another option. And many of those who are here took it. The problem is we no longer have that option of the 70s.

To conclude, it seems to me that in these meetings we have to say what we think and it is not necessary to agree on everything. Sometimes I think that seeking consensus prematurely and having certainty prematurely undermines the debate, so I leave you with my reflections, which are my own and do not necessarily have to be shared.

I really apologise because it is most unpleasant to have to leave, but as Jorge explained, I have no choice. Thank you very much.

JORGE DRKOS

We are very grateful Oscar for your concepts and we regret that you have to leave, but we understand perfectly well the reason for your absence. We know that you are carrying out an official task there in Ecuador, trying to guarantee that this process is transparent and that the winners of this contest are the ones that the Ecuadorian people effectively elect. We are all working hard so that Arauz wins in the first round. So thank you very much Oscar and we will be in touch for any other opportunity.

Marco, if you like, we will continue with the programme and welcome our colleague from the Sao Paulo Forum: Aida Naranjo from Peru, former legislator, ambassador, leader of the Peruvian Socialist Party, who is the moderator of the next panel, so that she can introduce the speakers who will continue in the order we have already planned. Go ahead, Aida.

AIDA GARCÍA-NARANJO (MOCHA) MODERATOR- Partido Socialista, Peru

Of course, thank you very much Jorge for giving me the floor and the change now in moderation. Good morning, good afternoon, good evening to this world of the leftists, the socialists, the progressives, the nationalists, the popular, as Oscar Laborde also says. A hug to all of you.

Welcome to this first panel. We have already listened with great interest to Oscar Laborde's presentation. We welcome the fact that we are all present at this fifth seminar organised jointly by the Party of the European Left and the Sao Paulo Forum, to work on the shared visions of all our lefts. Undoubtedly, as has already been pointed out, our focus is the socio-economic impacts of the pandemic and our proposals from the left.

We thank Oscar Laborde for his presentation and we will continue with the second panelist of this first panel. Heinz Bierbaum, President of the Party of the European Left. He is a sociologist, economist, head of the international commission of the Die Linke party and, since 2019, the head of the Party of the European Left. Welcome, it is a pleasure, it is an honour for us to introduce you, from Lambayeque (we are not in Lima), so go ahead and we give you the floor for 15 minutes, thank you very much for sharing.

HEINZ BIERBAUM - President of the Party of the European Left

I am glad that we can at least hold our "Shared Visions" seminar online. It is not the same as meeting in person. But it is the only possibility. From the EL's side I would like to say that the relationship with the FSP is of great importance. Also this seminar helps to strengthen the cooperation between the left in Latin America and the Caribbean and the European left.

We are all in a very difficult situation. The coronavirus pandemic is determining our working and living conditions. The pandemic has truly dramatic economic and social consequences. The most affected are the poor and people working in precarious conditions. Unemployment will rise sharply and so will poverty. Even in this pandemic situation, social inequalities are growing as an Oxfam study has recently revealed.

It is clear that there is a close link between the health crisis and neoliberal policy. The coronavirus pandemic clearly shows the failure of the dominant neoliberal economic and social model. As a consequence of neoliberal austerity policies of privatisation of public services, health systems are not able to cope with and solve the social needs in a pandemic. Because of neoliberal policies, the consequences of the pandemic are extremely dramatic. Where there is a strong public health system, as for example in Cuba, the situation is better.

As EL we have developed a platform on how to get out of the crisis socially. In this document we demand comprehensive action on five axes.

Firstly, everything must be done to protect people. We call for the urgent creation of a "Euro-

pean Health Fund” financed by the ECB.

An economic recovery is also needed in the direction of a transformation of the economy towards public, social and ecological goals.

Thirdly, there is the issue of democracy. Rights and democratic institutions cannot be called into question by the measures taken to combat the crisis: on the contrary, in difficult times like these, democracy and civil rights must be defended and expanded.

For the left, disarmament and peace are fundamental. Without peace there is no future for humanity. The pandemic is providing an opportunity for a new initiative for a policy of disarmament and détente. Military spending must be substantially reduced in order to invest in health and other social needs.

And, in view of the global dimension of the crisis, we want to intensify international solidarity.

In this crisis situation a strong left is needed. But unfortunately the situation is not in favour of the left. There is a risk of authoritarian solutions and the growth of nationalism, racism and the strengthening of the extreme right. On the other hand, the crisis clearly shows the failure of neo-liberal politics and reveals the existing structural crisis which, at the same time, also offers opportunities for the left to promote an alternative policy.

The platform “The coronavirus crisis and its consequences for European policies” is a first step in this direction. We also discussed the consequences of the coronavirus crisis at the European Forum that we organised together with other progressive and environmental forces, this year online. At the centre of the debate were the demands for the strengthening of a public sector that has been severely degraded by neoliberal policies and a radical change of economic policy in the direction of a social-ecological transformation of the economy.

We need a new industrialisation that respects the environment and ensures greater sovereignty, proposing a new productive model and a new, fairer and more progressive tax system that allows for increased social spending. We propose that big capital and multinational companies be taxed, as well as the abolition of tax havens inside and outside the EU.

We have decided to pursue a 6-point action plan:

- Support the “Right2Cure” campaign for free access to vaccination as a social right.
- To carry out an action on the 8th of March to express our defence of a Europe free of patriarchy.
- To call together with trade unions and social forces for a social way out of the crisis on the occasion of the May Day celebrations.
- To carry out actions on 5 June, World Environment Day, in defence of a Green Europe.
- Celebrate on the 8th May, the day of Europe’s victory over Nazi-fascism.
- To carry out an action reflecting a Europe of solidarity against rising racism and xenophobia.

The EL demands immediate measures to combat the consequences of the crisis and a radical change of policies, opening a new path for the development of society, which puts people at the centre.

I think it is very important to exchange our mutual experiences in the struggle to face the crisis of the coronavirus and for an alternative policy to the neoliberal policy.

The global crisis demands a global response from the left. Cooperation between progressive

and left forces is more necessary than ever, because we have a global situation characterised by very high tensions. There are many military conflicts and very worrying geopolitical changes. I am referring in particular to the geopolitics of the United States, which is oriented towards the supremacy of the USA. Although it was mainly former President Trump who pursued this policy, the new President Biden will not change that much either. Of course Biden is less aggressive and a bit softer. The US is using the coronavirus crisis to intensify the confrontation with China. There is, in a sense, a new cold war. The blockade of Cuba was intensified and has dramatic consequences.

A change is needed in international relations and geopolitics, which must be based on cooperation rather than confrontation. We need a new internationalism and international order. In my opinion, this new internationalism must be based on three fundamental axes:

- Multilateralism and democracy.
- Disarmament and peace.
- Social and ecological transformation.

Thank you very much.

AIDA GARCÍA-NARANJO (MOCHA) MODERATOR

Comrade, thank you very much. The set of recommendations, reflections and concrete measures that have been put forward are very important. They are very valuable for this shared vision and for the search for proposals from the left, so that we don't just stop at analysing the impact of the situation. All the contributions are very valuable, and I would like to thank you on behalf of all of us who are listening to you.

Let us now continue with our esteemed Monica Valente. We all know Monica Valente, but we often know little about her activities. She is a psychologist and a well-known trade unionist, but we know her much better as the Executive Secretary of the Sao Paulo Forum, with whom we regularly hold all our meetings. On these occasions, as with the parties of the European Left, the online mode has given us a great opportunity to continue with our reflections in this period of solidarity. Monica is also a member of the National Executive Committee of the Brazilian Workers' Party (PT). Welcome Monica to this virtual seminar, and we give you the floor.

MONICA VALENTE - Secretary of the Sao Paulo Forum

Thank you very much dear comrade Aida Naranjo Mocha, our Latin American leader, whom we are very honoured to have here as our moderator and table coordinator.

I would like to greet my comrades Marco Consolo, who is the coordinator of the EL working group on Latin America, and Jorge Drkos, my dear friend and also coordinator for the FSP of the liaison committee between the Sao Paulo Forum and the Party of the European Left. I would also like to greet my close friend Heinz Bierbaum, whose Spanish is very good. Heinz and I are not Spanish speakers and I think that your Spanish, Heinz, was a gift for us

here in this talk, and I congratulate you. Greetings to all of you who are here: to my friend Maite Mola, who is also with us, to our comrade Vittorio Agnoletto, who will give us a very important presentation on the panel, and also to the moderator, our comrade Raisa Musaka from the Left Alliance of Finland, this country so far away from us, from Latin America.

And I salute the organisers, Marco and Drkos, for holding this fifth seminar with tables and presentations with gender equality between men and women: as a woman, I cannot fail to point out this important achievement. And greet all those who listen to us, in this new world that is the virtual world, which we have begun to learn to use since what happened last year with the Coronavirus pandemic. I think we miss the times when we could be together in person. But I also believe that this virtual way helps us to connect with more people all over the world, so much so that today we say “good morning, good afternoon and good evening” to everyone who listens to us.

Dear comrades, it is a great honour and a great joy that we, the Party of the European Left and the Sao Paulo Forum, are finally able to meet here, albeit virtually. We have been exchanging ideas and experiences for many years, seeking to build a better and fairer world, and I greet you all.

Listening to Heinz’s presentation, I came to the conclusion that these years of exchange have been very good for us mutually, because we have many identities, many coincidences in our guidelines of struggle, of resistance struggle, of ideas to share with Humanity and to build this better and fairer world.

Last Saturday, we met as the Sao Paulo Forum, and engaged in a profound reflection on the issue under discussion here, this very difficult moment for humanity. A time of health, economic and social crisis in the face of the exceptionally serious situation in which the entire world population finds itself, both in terms of health due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and due to the worsening of the global economic and financial crisis. And also, taking into account the attitude of certain developed capitalist countries and big pharmaceutical companies to monopolise the production of vaccines, cutting off the possibility of their acquisition by the rest of the countries, particularly the poorest countries. This attitude shows the irrationality of neoliberal capitalism, because if the disease is not eradicated in every corner of the planet, no one will be safe from new waves and new mutations, and perhaps new viruses. It also warns that in some countries entire populations are excluded from vaccination, for example in Israel, where the Palestinian population is excluded in a racist and genocidal way.

Faced with these considerations that we debated last Saturday, we as the Sao Paulo Forum decided to launch a call to all world leaders. We call on all world leaders, meeting in an appropriate setting and without exclusions, to commit themselves, expressly and formally, to cooperation and complementarity agreements, and to establish effective international and regional mechanisms. In line with what Heinz has said about the new multilateralism and democracy. We want leaders to be able to guarantee the production and distribution of medical supplies for the care of patients with COVID-19, so that they reach everyone, by developing a single global plan and strategy approved by the World Health Organisation.

We also want to guarantee the production of scientifically proven vaccines against

Coronavirus and of any type of preventive and/or curative medicine against this disease, approved by the world health authorities and distributed free of charge. We want to declare that vaccines are a public good of humanity, and that the laboratories of the different countries have to work together for the improvement of the existing vaccines and the establishment of a production and distribution plan that does not abide by patents or property rights, but by the interest and the need of all humanity.

We also want these world leaders to be able to generate a global economic aid plan until the health and economic crisis is resolved, guaranteeing an income for all people in need so that they can have access to the basic necessities of drinking water, food, medication, education, clothing and housing.

Also agree to suspend, for a period to be determined, all payments on the sovereign foreign debt of countries considered to be developing or economically vulnerable. It is not possible, in order to face the pandemic, that we continue to have to pay absurd debts, at the same time that our population suffers from hunger, dying, and the diseases we suffer from, including COVID.

And we also demand that world peace be maintained, as Heinz said; as one of the European Forum's guidelines, we want existing conflicts to be de-escalated, preventing the emergence of any other conflict.

Finally, we also call for an end to all economic blockades and unilateral economic sanctions, or policies of isolation of countries in the region, opting in all cases for negotiation and agreements.

We hope that this call can reverberate urgently throughout the world. To the leaders, to the people, to our popular, trade union, party organisations. Because, comrades, we will not have time to save Humanity, not only from the COVID disease, but from all the other evils that neoliberal capitalism is bringing to all Humanity.

That is the reason for our call, and I believe that it is possible to generate joint actions between the Sao Paulo Forum, the European Left Party, the European Forum, to fight for peace, for life and for the health of all Humanity. This seminar will certainly help us to formulate and participate jointly in our activities in Europe and in Latin America and the Caribbean in 2021. I believe, comrades, that, in spite of all the difficulties, all the illnesses, deaths and hunger, we have a path for the year 2021 of much struggle to conquer the victories that Humanity needs.

A big hug to all of you, and we will continue to share our visions.

AIDA GARCÍA-NARANJO (MOCHA) MODERATOR

Comrades, we have reached the end of this first panel. We thank you once again for holding this activity, which is fundamental for us. Undoubtedly, we must highlight the proposals that have been made. They are concrete proposals, which will effectively bring our

common visions into consensus.

On the basis of the people's struggle against the measures and consequences of the neo-liberal model, there is the need to become a pole of a multipolar world, not giving up street mobilisation and direct struggle, the consideration not only of unity but also of breadth, the adaptation of leaderships (as well as their renewal), and the creation of a fund for health (we add not only European but also Andean/Amazonian and the whole of our Latin America).

Like Monica, our representative from Europe also points out: the extension of rights, disarmament and peace are becoming necessary; the global dimension of the crisis undoubtedly implies the path of solidarity.

The theme of 8th of March reflects the need for our own spaces, free of patriarchy, and for women's representation in the global struggle as a whole.

There has been talk of green Europe, we would say, green Europe, green America, green World, as one of the possibilities, undoubtedly yes.

For the global crisis, a global response is needed, as many have said. From World leaders we have requested collaboration and complementarity, not confrontation; there is total agreement (and Monica summarised it very well) on the need for a new multilateralism, and that the vaccine should be a public good, universal, as an effectively tested vaccine, is an important addition that Monica has made.

Undoubtedly, an end to the blockades, and therefore negotiation and political agreement in this space of systemic crisis that requires an alternative global response. The alternatives are very valuable, and I hope that we will also be able to see these videos again, which are broadcast on the open line.

From the north of Peru, Aida García Naranjo says goodbye, but not without saying that although it is true that in Peru there has not been a social explosion, we are also moving towards a constituent moment. We have closed the Fujimorist congress. We have defeated the coup that took place on 9 November in Peru, and we are on the way, in second place, to aspire to the electoral process that will take place on 11 April.

A hug from Peru, a hug from the land of the Incas, and special love to all of you. Strength, go forward, we are the victors.

JORGE DRKOS

Thank you very much Aida for your words, and we give the floor to Raisa Musaka, to continue moderating the second panel of the day.

Second Panel

RAISA MUSAKA - MODERATOR - Left Alliance, Finland

Good morning Latin America, good afternoon and good evening Europe. My name is Raisa Musaka, I am from Finland, I come from the Left Alliance Party of Finland, but now I greet you from Quito, Ecuador, where we are with the delegation of the European Left observing the elections.

I have the honour to moderate this second panel of the seminar “Shared Visions”, which is a nice space to share our experiences.

And our first speaker is my great colleague, my great friend, Maite Mola, who is also first vice-president of the European Left Party, as well as being responsible for the international commission of the EL. She is also a member of the Direction of the Communist Party of Spain and of the federal Izquierda Unida. Maite is also a feminist militant and a great comrade. Go ahead, Maite.

MAITE MOLA - First Vice-President of the European Left Party

Thank you very much Raisa. I am very excited about this online debate, which I find very interesting. Not only the words of Marco, of Jorge, of Heinz, of Aida from Peru, of Monica. It is very important that we have these seminars, even if it is virtual. We thank the FSP for being with us as always. Raisa, Oscar and I are in Quito with our hearts in our hands for what may happen tomorrow.

In this panel I would like to introduce an issue of great concern to us, both in Latin America and the Caribbean and in Europe, which is the rise of authoritarianism due to the Covid-19 epidemic and which has provided an opportunity for extreme right-wing and populist forces to criticise democracy, while denouncing the weakness of the management of the health crisis by so-called democratic regimes and supporting the “effectiveness” of authoritarian regimes in the battle against COVID.

We have already seen this in recent years: in the name of the fight against terrorism, some European countries, such as France, Belgium and Spain, use the argument of terrorism to silence freedom of expression.

In recent years, many right-wing and extreme right-wing politicians, sometimes unfortunately followed by some self-styled social democrats, have brandished the idea that the first of human rights is the “right to security”. This has been used systematically in Europe (for example in Hungary and Ukraine), and certainly in Latin America and the Caribbean, in Brazil, Honduras, Ecuador, Chile and El Salvador by their populist leaders. But they pretend to forget that the “security” mentioned in article 2 of the Declaration of Human Rights refers first and foremost to the protection of individual liberties against arbitrariness. A regime where it is possible to be arbitrarily arrested, tortured, tried without defence, is a regime where citizens are deprived of security.

Nor does the European Court of Human Rights help much when it gives states wide latitude to restrict people's rights in the name of national security imperatives. It has validated limits on freedom of expression, privacy, the right of association or free elections, and so it goes.

So, we find that democracy is undoubtedly under threat from conservative and far-right forces. We have been astonished to see what is happening in El Salvador with Bukele's statements about the assassination of FMLN comrades, accusing them of self-attack. Anything seems possible.

And there is a belief that authoritarianism, i.e. the granting of considerable, even arbitrary, powers to the police, in theory accompanied by judicial control, makes it possible to deal with problems. However, far from helping maintain order, these laws limit or abrogate fundamental freedoms, such as respect for privacy, the right to demonstrate and also the right to free movement.

Moreover, we know that authoritarianism is often accompanied by a disregard for the rules in force: for example, a great deal of illegal police behaviour has been brought to light during trials related to the "gilet jaunes" in France, identity checks, searches of luggage or vehicles beyond any concept of legality, or what is happening in Chile these days. In short, police violence is treated indulgently by the judicial authorities and the police hierarchy.

Before the pandemic, as some of you have said, we had a very powerful IWD on 8th March, there were many mobilisations in Chile, and revolts broke out all over the world against the oligarchic drift of democracies.

So, what to do as the Party of the European Left?

EL calls for mobilisation to safeguard democracy. We consider that the COVID-19 crisis threatens democracy and that there is a risk, as we saw a fortnight ago in Portugal with the result of the presidential elections, with a growth of the extreme right and its rhetoric of total lack of solidarity. We must do this together with the São Paulo Forum and with other spaces of unity, not only among ourselves, but globally.

In the face of attempts to take advantage of the emergency to limit or suspend our rights, as EL (as Heinz has said very clearly) we must defend democracy and its institutions. Parliaments cannot be closed with the excuse of the pandemic, as for example they did in Hungary.

We know that very strict measures are needed to contain the pandemic. But we must be vigilant and ensure that the restrictions on freedom deemed necessary to stop the spread of the pandemic remain exceptional measures.

The EL also strongly reject any attempt to misuse the coronavirus pandemic to engage in xenophobic, sexist or nationalist demagoguery and, of course, against migration.

More than ever there is a need for the unity of the left and progressive forces, and also to say that we will always be with Cuba, against the blockade and for the Nobel Peace Prize to the Cuban medical brigade, as well as against the sanctions against Venezuela.

To conclude,

- The Covid-19 pandemic reinforces the authoritarianism used by neo-liberalism.
- The fight against terrorism must not be used as a pretext to attack individual and associative

freedoms and the principles of the rule of law.

- We must be against attempts to take advantage of the emergency to limit or suspend our rights.

- And finally to say that the EL wants to focus on cultural and value-based principles that allow the full development of the human being in an egalitarian and ecologically protected society.

RAISA MUSAKA - MODERATOR

Thank you very much Maite, always a pleasure to listen to you. Thank you for your words.

Our second panelist is Vittorio Agnoletto, and he comes from Italy. He is a doctor, specialised in occupational medicine, a former MEP and teaches “globalisation and health policy” at the University of Milan. He is also a member of the national board of “Medicina Democratica”, of the International Council of the World Social Forum, of the European section of the “People’s Health Movement”. He is also a founding member of the “Italian League for the fight against AIDS”. Thank you for joining us. You have the floor Vittorio.

VITTORIO AGNOLETTI - Doctor and former MEP, Italy.

Thank you very much for this invitation to all the comrades of the Sao Paulo Forum and the European Left.

I am speaking to you from Milan, Lombardy, which is the region of Europe that has been hardest hit by the pandemic and which is probably one of the regions of the world where we have paid, and are paying, the highest price in terms of the number of deaths. Based on official statistics alone, which are underestimated, we have exceeded 270 deaths per 100,000 inhabitants. A truly enormous figure. I believe that, in the face of the pandemic, it is absolutely necessary to develop a global movement, because we either get out of this situation together or we do not get out at all.

The virus is doing its own work, but in this work it has been greatly aided by neoliberal policies and market dominance.

The first point I would like to make is the disaster caused by the privatisation of health services. Even when private structures enter into relations with public structures, i.e. through agreements with the public health service, they do so always and only with an eye to their profits. Let us never forget that when the private sector invests in health, for them sickness and disease are profits. For the private sector, prevention has no meaning; on the contrary, it is an antagonist because, if it works well, it removes the sick person from the market.

All over the world the private sector focuses on hospitals with high surgical technology and

extremely expensive cures. And these cures can only be guaranteed to a limited number of people. Just think that in Europe a course of anti-tumour therapies costs between 150 and 180 thousand euros. The private sector chooses where to invest, without any interest in local, territory based medicine.

When the pandemic arrived, there was no active warning system in our territories, no health surveillance system, no pandemic plan to detect the arrival of the virus. The virus was discovered at the end of February 2020 in Lombardy, but the virus was already present two months earlier. But preventive medicine and epidemiology do not interest them.

Let's look at the current situation: at the moment we have 7 billion and 800 million people whose lives are in the hands of a very small group of leaders of "Big pharma", the large multinational pharmaceutical companies.

The situation we are currently experiencing on the issue of vaccines is not at all surprising and was absolutely foreseeable.

So much so that, already in the spring of 2020, there were calls all over the world to question the TRIPS agreements, the intellectual property agreements signed in 1995 at the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

These agreements state that if a company launches a drug or vaccine on the market, it holds the patent for 20 years. This means that it has a monopoly and can determine where, how, when and what to produce and with whom to sign commercial agreements. If we add to this the fact that in much of the world, certainly in Europe, almost all pharmaceutical research is in private hands, it is clear what enormous power "big pharma" has.

Last April, scientists from all over the world called for a moratorium on patents on curative medicine for Covid. In the autumn, a document produced by India and South Africa and endorsed by a hundred countries was published, asking the WTO for a moratorium on patents and asking to be able to discuss it in a "fast track", that is, immediately. The United States and the European Commission opposed this proposal and left patents in the hands of the multinationals.

The consequences are those we are experiencing today. That is, companies do not have the productive capacity to deliver vaccines to everyone. They set high prices and behave like sellers of any other commodity. Therefore, they do not respect signed agreements and sell to the buyer who offers more. For example, if Israel offers more, the vaccines go to Israel.

The incredible thing is that those vaccines are the product of research financed with a lot of money, we are talking about billions of euros and dollars from the states (therefore, public money), but the patent remains in private hands.

Worse, the European Commission and our governments signed an agreement allowing trade agreements to be secret: they have paid with our money, they have left intellectual property to private companies and they prevent us from knowing which trade agreements they have signed.

That is not all. It seems that there is a secret clause which stipulates that, in the event of serious pathologies resulting from vaccines, it is the states which must compensate the citizens and not the pharmaceutical companies.

At the moment, some states are talking about taking legal action against pharmaceutical companies that do not respect contracts. Excuse me, but let's be clear: this is a total joke.

Pharmaceutical companies don't care about fines at all, because they earn much more. Just think that, worldwide, from 1991 to 2015, "Big pharma", all pharmaceutical companies, have paid 37.5 billion dollars in fines, in 25 years. But in just 10 years, from 2003 to 2012, the top 11 pharmaceutical companies have made profits of 711 billion dollars. This is not just me saying it, it is not the World Social Forum saying it, it is not the Sao Paulo Forum saying it. Neoliberal institutions say so. Credit Suisse, Bloomberg Intelligence and others estimate that from 2020 onwards, for Covid-19 vaccines alone, these companies will make profits of 10 billion dollars a year. According to Credit Suisse the profits will be as high as 50/60 billion dollars, according to others it will be only 20/30 billion dollars. On the other hand, we will have millions and millions of people dying.

This is why we have launched in Europe what is technically called the "European Citizens' Initiative (ECI)", an institutional instrument foreseen by the European Union. We must collect one million signatures online by the 20th of November (we have one year to do so). When we deliver these signatures, the European Commission will be obliged to open a debate in the European Parliament and the Council of Europe on our proposals.

What are we proposing? I summarise the three main proposals:

- 1) Support the proposal by India and South Africa, which will return to the debate in March at the World Trade Organisation, for a moratorium on patents.
- 2) Rediscuss all agreements in which vaccines have been publicly funded. We say that these vaccines must immediately be made public and considered a common good.
- 3) A fundamental and entirely political question: we ask that States (and all States in the world could do so), declare the use of compulsory licences. This means applying that safeguard clause provided for in the patent agreements. A clause that says that countries in economic crisis and countries facing a pandemic, if they do not reach an agreement with multinationals, have the right to produce drugs directly, ignoring patents.

Taking such a decision would mean opening a serious confrontation within the WTO.

We must not forget that, between 1997 and 2001, faced with 35% of the female population of childbearing age positive for HIV, Nelson Mandela gave South African companies the go-ahead to disregard patents and produce drugs. He was denounced by 49 multinationals. After that event, safeguard clauses began to be applied. The United States, Europe, Japan, Switzerland and Australia did everything they could to prevent their use until now. Now is the time to impose the use of compulsory licences on our governments.

The confrontation revealed by the pandemic is extremely clear.

Two opposing logics are clearly visible: on the one hand, the triumph of the market and the logic of everyone for themselves, even within the capitalist system. At the moment, the OECD countries are competing with each other to kneel down before “Big Pharma” and replenish them with dollars, euros and gold. It is the logic of competition, the logic of “mors tua, vita mea” (your death is my life).

On the other hand, during the pandemic we have witnessed gestures and decisions of solidarity and international collaboration. In Milan, we will never forget the brigades of solidarity that arrived from China, Cuba, Romania and Albania. Without them, we would not have been able to cope on our own.

So therein lies the clash of these two logics.

In a recent statement, Lula said that the post-pandemic will be a period of conflicts. I believe that we cannot go back to the world of the past. The past world is the one that produced this pandemic. Let us not forget that the pandemic is the result of a development model that has destroyed and is destroying the planet. We see it in the Amazon these days: deforestation, intensive livestock farming, climate change caused by hyper-production, are breaking down what separates one species from the other and are pushing new infectious agents to make a species jump, to get into humans and thus be spread around the world.

This is not the last pandemic we will have to face.

Therefore, one of the key issues must be the battle for free, universal, public health services in all countries, supported by a general taxation system proportional to income.

The battle for health must be the battle of the entire world left. For this reason, I am very happy to have been invited to this meeting and I believe that the effort in the field of health will be one of the fundamental points of convergence between the European Left and the Sao Paulo Forum.

Thank you.

RAISA MUSAKA - MODERATOR

Thank you very much Vittorio for your words, thank you very much.

And now we have our third panellist, Roy Daza. Roy is a writer and journalist, he is a member of the International Affairs Commission of the United Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV). He is a deputy in the National Assembly, and is second vice-president of the Foreign Policy Committee. He is also a member of the Peace, Dialogue and National Reconciliation Commission. Welcome Roy. You have the floor.

ROY DAZA - PSUV MP, Venezuela

Dear friends, comrades!

With deepest respect, I would like to send my warmest greetings of solidarity from the land of Simón Bolívar and Hugo Chávez, hoping that you are all in good health, and wishing you every success in 2021.

The collective effort of this Seminar is to plant a seed to forge new and greater rapprochements between us, joining wills to achieve the great objectives of liberation, social welfare, participatory democracy and sovereignty of nations.

We would like to present a very brief account of the essential issues of the international situation marked by the pandemic, the economic recession and by dizzying geopolitical shifts. You are all aware that the validity of the diagnosis of general economic tendencies and their present on going transformations constitutes the basis for the formulation of the political line to be followed by revolutionary forces.

Our theoretical point of departure is summed up with extraordinary precision by Rosa Luxemburg, when she teaches us that:

“Marxism is a revolutionary world vision which constantly has to struggle to attain new knowledge, despising nothing so much as the clinging to formerly valid forms, and which preserves its vital force at its best in the interweaving of the intellectual weapons of self-criticism and the flashing and thundering of history” - 1916.

We propose, then, for discussion, the hypothesis that the hegemony of US imperialism has entered a phase of decline, economically and politically.

A new configuration of the map of the poles of power in the world is underway, and the recent events of January 6 in Washington, when an armed group of Donald Trump supporters stormed the Capitol, has shaken the foundations of the US political system. This has and will have far-reaching repercussions.

Among others, it should be noted that some analysts consider that the unity of that nation is in danger, that the differences between financial and industrial corporations can no longer be modelled, that the economic crisis has reached broad sectors of society, and that social inequality has become deeper and wider. Politically, the neo-fascist tendencies led by former president Trump have an important influence, while, in another direction, a socialist tendency is emerging that has formulated an advanced programme of social demands and has changed the internal political map of the United States.

The scepticism regarding the electoral system, the traditional parties, the actions of the plutocratic political spheres, the existence of racism and xenophobia, are increasingly challenging the narrative of the “great American dream”. It is no longer possible to portray as the champion of “democracy” a system that was never democratic. The whole world perceives that

the ideological, political, legal, institutional, economic, financial and military framework of imperialism is an incontrovertible truth, which allows us to affirm that the main contradiction in the world at this time is between the whole of humanity and US imperialism.

And it is in the field of economics that the progressive decline of imperialism can be seen most clearly. It should be remembered that in 1945, just after the end of the Second World War, the US economy accounted for 50 % of world GDP, and that three years later the volume of its exports reached 22 %.

Therefore, being the greatest military power on the planet and having the largest GDP and the largest volume of exports, it was possible for the dollar to become the reference currency for international trade and financial transactions.

However, in 2000, the weight of the US Gross Domestic Product in the world was 31%, in 2005, it was 27%, in 2019, it was 24%; while the Chinese economy has experienced a staggering growth of 9.8% per year between 1980 and 2010, and from 2010 onwards, it has grown at 7%.

And we advance this figure: in the midst of the pandemic, in 2020, China has grown 2.5 %, while the US economy's record has been negative, i.e. minus 6 %, two digits below the battered international economy, which was minus 4 % last year.

It is now commonplace to say that China is technologically ahead of the United States and Europe, and it is useful to note that the combined GDP of the BRICS countries is 24% of global GDP, the same as that of the US economy.

Paul Craig Robert, who was assistant secretary of the Treasury Department, argues that "Since 2008, services and goods have not grown in proportion to the dollars that the Federal Reserve has created", that is, that one of the causes of the "crash" of 2008 is still there, and that this has an impact on the economy of all nations, derived from the breakdown of the Bretton Woods pact (1944), when it was agreed that the reference was the dollar, but based on a gold backing. This agreement was dynamited by the United States in 1971, in order to solve its balance of payments problems. There can be no doubt that this fact is at the genesis of the enormous destabilisation of the world economy, and is the source of successive crises that came to a head in the crash of 2008/09.

New phenomena are present on the world scene, which could constitute the objective basis for a revolutionary wave on a world scale.

It must be stated, in the most categorical manner, that the neo-liberal formula, applied by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, has proved its economic ineffectiveness, and that it is the main source of the high degree of social inequality that today prevails in all nations.

To summarise, it is evident that the US economy now has a smaller share of world GDP and a large trade and fiscal deficit, particularly with regard to China, that the dollar is being displaced as the market's reference currency, that the United Nations is talking about the need to

move towards a basket of several currencies to establish a reference, and that there is a fall in domestic savings and an exponential growth of its internal and external debt.

In 2021, we are facing a global economic crisis, more than two billion people are out of work, the uncertainty generated by the pandemic has intensified in recent weeks, a real human tragedy is sweeping the world. And the situation becomes more difficult when two phenomena come together: on the one hand, the direct impact of the pandemic on the economy, and on the other hand, the unresolved crisis of the world economy that is flaring up again.

Given such a serious situation, which is multi-faceted, one of the deficits to be resolved is the one indicated at the time by Commander Fidel Castro: he stated that the world is facing a crisis of ideas, that there is a need for huge debate on the great problems of humanity, that global solutions must be sought to global problems. Pandemics, climate change, the deepening of social inequalities, migrations, the lack of water in a large part of the planet, the irruption of neo-fascist forces in America and Europe...

Today, the unity of the European Left and the Sao Paulo Forum is of vital importance. These two international groupings must make progress in defining a maximum programme. It is urgent to form working teams to analyse the current development and contradictions of the capitalist system, as the basis to set a path for the future.

As a Venezuelan and a Chavista, allow me to say a few brief words about my country. Imperialism is trying to destroy the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. We are the target of the most serious economic, political and media aggression we have faced in two hundred years of independence. Over us is the Damocles sword of the threat of military invasion.

We will defend our independence at any cost. We only ask to be heard and respected, and that everyone must know that we will not lower the flags of socialism raised by our historic leader, Commander Hugo Chávez, now raised by President Maduro and by the people in civic-military unity.

We want to express our deep gratitude for your tireless solidarity with the struggles of our people, and we say goodbye with our slogan: Unity, Struggle, Battle and Victory.

RAISA MUSAKA - MODERATOR

Thank you very much comrade Roy, and I would also like to express our full solidarity with the Venezuelan people, who are facing the unjust economic sanctions. We are with you.

And to close this second panel, the words of all three speakers of this last panel have shown that we are together in this crisis, this pandemic and this health crisis. And that the solutions are based on international solidarity. As Roy said, we must seek global solutions to global problems.

Thank you very much and now I give the floor to Marco.

Closing

MARCO CONSOLO

I would like to thank everyone for their contribution to this important seminar. It has been an interesting and useful debate, with many enriching ideas. As comrade Mónica Valente said, we continue to move forward in a frank and open dialogue, which began many years ago. There are many issues on which we agree in this space in which we continue to contribute to the definition of a common agenda. These are “shared visions” that need implementation, concrete actions and common battles between the forces of the Sao Paulo Forum and the Party of the European Left. This is the commitment we make today.

To close, I would like to give the floor to Maite Mola and comrade Monica Valente.

MAITE MOLA

I would prefer that Monica closes. I’m going to be very brief, and I’m not going to draw conclusions, because it’s impossible. Everyone’s words have been wonderful, haven’t they? Just a couple of comments.

I think it is essential to continue with the seminar, because it is true that we have more and more things in common since we started the first seminar.

On the one hand, I would say that unfortunately, as far as the attacks of capitalism, imperialism and neo-fascism are concerned, both in Europe and in Latin America. So these things are “unfortunately” common.

But I would also say that we are fortunate, because we are increasingly aware of the need to work together, and to exchange joint struggles, as well as the need to build regional structures, completely different in Europe from the ones we have now, and to work with social movements and trade unions, above all by strengthening mobilisation.

I fully agree with Roy’s maximum program, and in this sense, as Heinz Bierbaum also said earlier, the fight for peace is central, based on a multipolar world, in solidarity, where the person is at the centre.

Thank you very much and it has been a real pleasure.

MONICA VALENTE

Dear Marco, Jorge, Maite, Roy, Raisa, Vittorio, Heinz, Oscar Laborde and our dear Aida Naranjo Mocha: it has been, as Maite said, a real pleasure to share these reflections at this moment. I agree very much with Maite when she says that we have more and more things in common. Since the first “Shared Visions” seminar, the Sao Paulo Forum and the Party of the European Left have been building consensus and working on very, very, very important ideas.

I would propose that we do two things. The first is to publish everyone's presentations, because they were very rich. And the second is that there are many proposals on the table. Those of the Sao Paulo Forum, those of the Party of the European Left, of the European Forum, which just finished in December.

I think it would be very useful if our two commissions, the Forum's liaison commission and the commission of the EL working group, could systematise ideas and proposals, so that we can do things together during this first half of the year.

As FSP we have a schedule of activities and so do you. So we can meet in some of the activities of the two schedules, even if it is only in a virtual way.

So, to those who contribute to these commissions, I am proposing a little more work so that we can enhance the richness of this seminar, because I think we have a lot of points in common.

And, from our platforms, in our countries, with the alliances with the popular, trade union and people's movements that we have in both continents, we can do things, joint actions that can have an impact on this world, which, as my dear Roy Daza has put it so well, "global problems need global solutions". We need new ideas, as Comandante Fidel Castro always taught us, and also Comandante Chávez, who was a great leader who always gave us ideas and reflections of great quality.

So I thank you very much, and we are going to try, in the first half of the year, to carry out some joint actions, even if they are virtual, under a great consensus. This great consensus of ideas that we have been building for more than five years.

One of the advantages of this virtual event is that it is recorded, and this seminar will probably be seen many times, and the debate, the reflection, will continue in a very fruitful way.

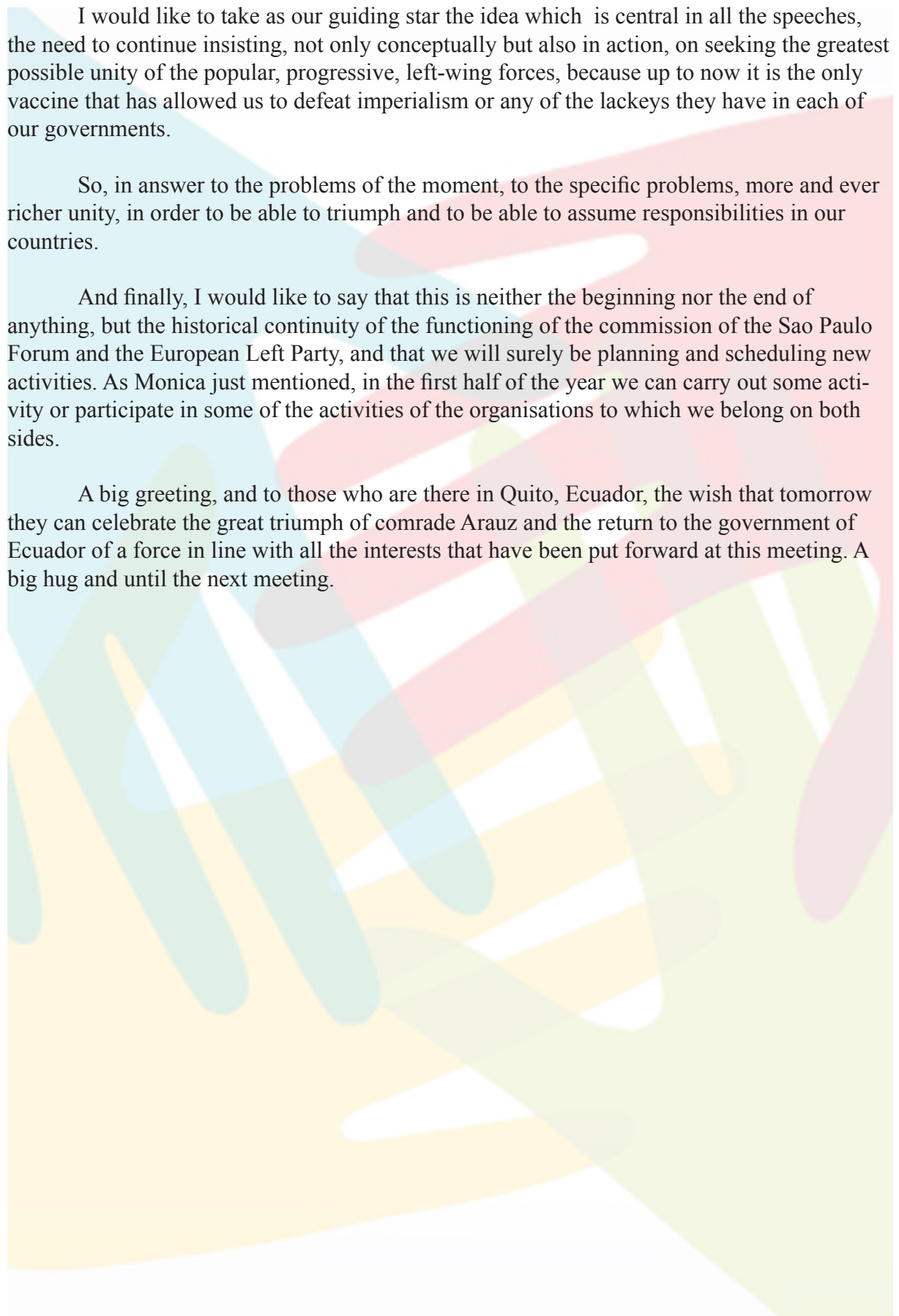
A big hug to everyone, congratulations to Marco, Jorge, Piera, and all the interpreters who helped us on this important day.

MARCO CONSOLO

Well, just to say goodbye and to say that this seminar will be recorded and can be found on the websites of the Sao Paulo Forum and the Party of the European Left. I close it here. Jorge, do you want to say goodbye?

JORGE DRKOS

Yes, Marco. Well, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the comrades who have spoken today, and those who have participated.



I would like to take as our guiding star the idea which is central in all the speeches, the need to continue insisting, not only conceptually but also in action, on seeking the greatest possible unity of the popular, progressive, left-wing forces, because up to now it is the only vaccine that has allowed us to defeat imperialism or any of the lackeys they have in each of our governments.

So, in answer to the problems of the moment, to the specific problems, more and ever richer unity, in order to be able to triumph and to be able to assume responsibilities in our countries.

And finally, I would like to say that this is neither the beginning nor the end of anything, but the historical continuity of the functioning of the commission of the Sao Paulo Forum and the European Left Party, and that we will surely be planning and scheduling new activities. As Monica just mentioned, in the first half of the year we can carry out some activity or participate in some of the activities of the organisations to which we belong on both sides.

A big greeting, and to those who are there in Quito, Ecuador, the wish that tomorrow they can celebrate the great triumph of comrade Arauz and the return to the government of Ecuador of a force in line with all the interests that have been put forward at this meeting. A big hug and until the next meeting.